Thursday, August 16, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 249 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

NEWS/ A16

No classes in all levels today in Metro, 5 provinces

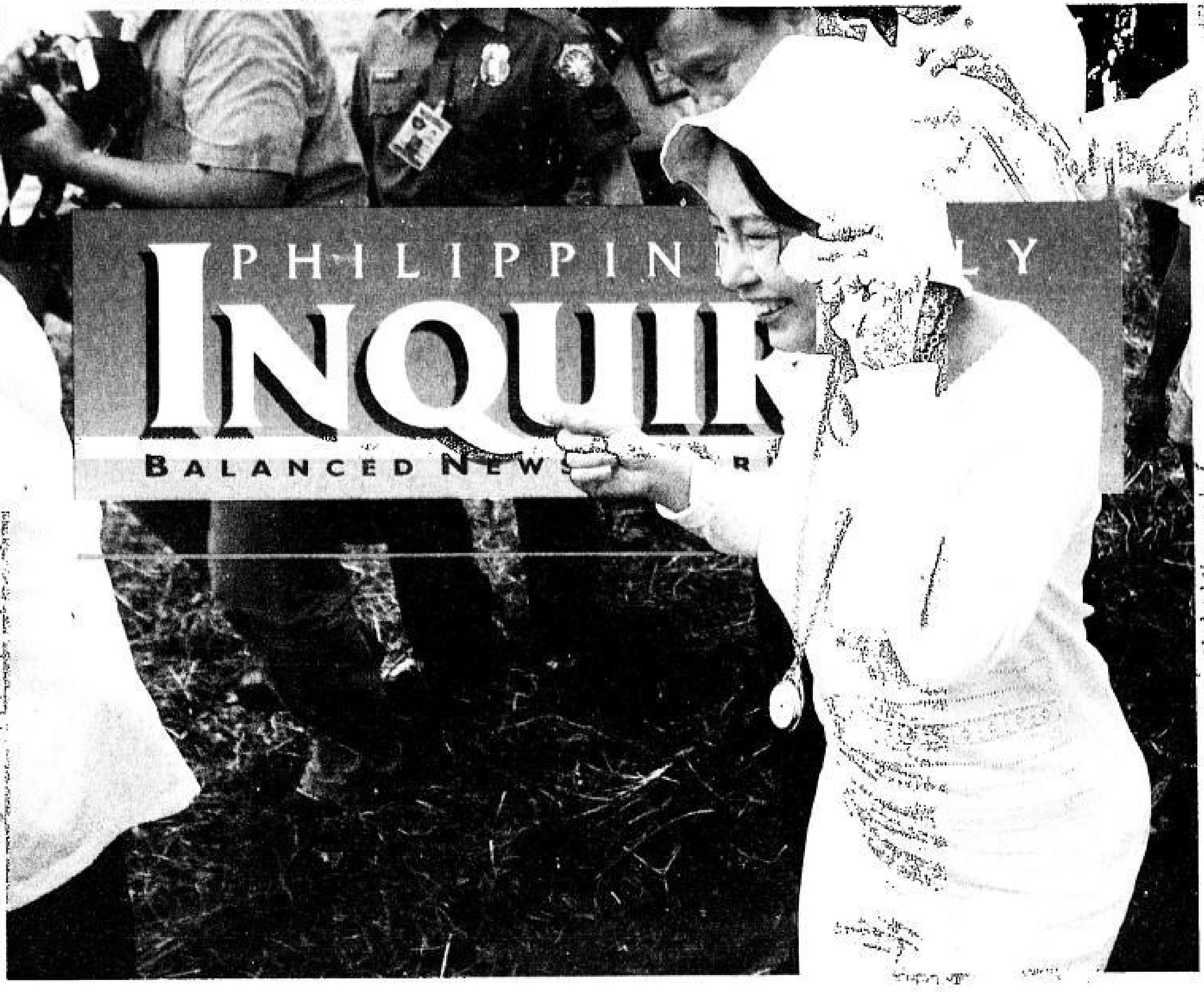
Complete listing of new doctors on www.inquirer.net

WORLD/ A19

Truck bombs slaughter 200 people in north Iraq

NEWS / A2

AFP: US troops in Sulu, Basilan on site survey to prepare for military exercises



NAKATIKIM SIYA NG BUHAY PINOY!

It's one for pulp fiction: Tarantino on 'padyak'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

ICONIC HOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR Quentin Tarantino was the picture of an amused child after an unusual experience yesterday—he had to get off a flood-stuck limousine and ride a pedicab to reach Malacañang and get his lifetime achievement award for film.

"It was a lot of fun. It just took a

IT'S ONE/ A8

GREAT EQUALIZER: Stranded in traffic, mired in floodwaters, President Arroyo takes a roundabout route on Wednesday morning to meet her engagements in Eastwood, Quezon City, and Camarin, Caloocan City. When she gets to the North Haven Community, an NHA housing project in Camarin II, she struggles against the wind to keep her cap on, and seems to be enjoying her exertions in the rain. LYN RILLON

GMA gets stuck in flood

Pagasa warns of possible supertyphoon

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, TJ Burgonio and Jeannette I. Andrade

AS THE COUNTRY'S WEATHER swung from one extreme to another, pounding rains from Typhoon "Egay" yesterday turned Metro Manila streets into rivers, paralyzing a wide area of the metropolis and bringing misery to millions. *(See related story in Metro section.)*

But the worst may yet come. Egay may be building up into a supertyphoon, weather experts warned.

They blamed the widespread flooding on waterways clogged with garbage.

No less than President Macapagal-Arroyo had a taste of what it was like to get stuck in floods and traffic when her convoy was caught in one of the day's monstrous traffic jams, forcing her to swing around so she could reach her appointments on Wednesday morning.

She might have had a slight edge over ordinary mortals as she sat out the snarled traffic in the air-conditioned comfort of her

GMA GETS/ A6

IN REMEMBRANCE: With the wife of the AFP chief of staff, soldiers with candles in hand participate in the celebration of Mass on Tuesday night at Camp Aguinaldo for 27 comrades killed in Basilan and Sulu. The scheduled procession was rained out. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Asian, Euro stocks tumble over credit crunch in US

TOKYO—ASIAN AND EUROPEAN STOCKS on Wednesday tumbled as markets continued to battle jitters over a credit crunch started by problems in the US subprime credit sector and as broader concerns emerged about the US economy.

Philippine shares also fell to a five-month low. The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index dropped 133.22 points, or 4.1 percent, to 3130.34 in moderate volume. That's the lowest level since March 21, when the main index finished at 3090.47.

Following the fall of the local stock market, the peso dropped to a six-week low against the US dollar. The peso closed at 46.23 to the

ASIAN/ A9

Ms Esperon: My voice just sounded loud

By Christine O. Avendano

THE WIFE OF THE ARMED FORCES chief of staff yesterday said she did nothing wrong in questioning the priests at St. Ignatius Church in Camp Aguinaldo why there was no special mention of the soldiers killed in Sulu at the Mass last Sunday.

Dr. Lorna Esperon admitted she was "upset" at "that moment," but said she had neither raised her voice nor given the priests a scolding—or a "bawl-out," as reported by the INQUIRER the other day.

"I'm Ilocana. I'm not bawling out [anyone]. It just sounded loud. I'm really experiencing voice fatigue," she said.

She said she was initially hurt and

MS ESPERON/ A4

Immigration holds 3 women for 'links' to Afghan's Taliban

By Tarra Quismundo

THEY WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE AT the end of an episode that would have been amusing were it not so chilling.

On Tuesday night, multiawarded Filipino novelist Ninotchka Rosca, assistant professor Annalisa Enrile and human rights advocate Judith Mirkinson—all visiting officers of the activist group Gabriela Network (GABNet) USA—were barred from flying out and held for about 30 minutes at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Centennial Terminal.

IMMIGRATION/ A8

SC upholds validity of Smokey Mountain contract

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY upheld the validity of the government's 1993 deal with R-II Builders Inc. (RBI) to turn the Smokey Mountain dumpsite in Manila into a low-cost housing and commercial area.

The court said the National Housing Authority (NHA) has the power to reclaim lands and transfer these to its private partner without bidding.

The NHA was directed to make public, specifically to former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez, documents pertaining to its joint venture agreement (JVA) with RBI for the project, which would entail reclaiming an area across R-10 road.

As part of the JVA, RBI would own the reclaimed land and the commercial area in Smokey Mountain.

The tribunal dismissed Chavez's bid to declare the JVA unconstitutional and invalid, finding no merit in his arguments that NHA and RBI could not reclaim foreshore and submerged lands and that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) did not give them the authority to do so.

Chavez also said RBI could not ac-

SC UPHOLDS/ A4

MAGSAYSAY AWARDS

Sino writer pays back nature, his life saver

By Angelina G. Goloy
Contributor

TO POETS, ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS, nature is a great inspiration.

To writer Tang Xiyang, pioneer of the environmental protection movement in China, nature is also a life saver. In his darkest hour, when political persecution and separation from loved ones all but sapped his will to go on living, "flowing waters ... singing birds, and rustling leaves" revived his spirit.

These alone, he realized, made life worth living.

Now that nature is in distress, he is repaying the debt of gratitude by advocating its protection and preservation, especial-

SINO WRITER/ A8

TANG XIYANG: "Flowing waters, singing birds and rustling leaves revive the spirit," says China's pioneer of environmental protection, awardee for peace and international understanding.

For love of Pete, stars, old and new, sing hearts out

By Emmie G. Velarde
Editor, Entertainment

IN STELLAR LINEUP, REPERTOIRE and audience involvement, it was, in industry parlance, the standard "rousing success."

Production-wise, the tribute show on Monday night left a lot to be desired: The "stage" was static, the sound system precarious, the script an exercise in improvisation.

But it was improv a la Clover Theater, for the lucky ones who remembered, and no one cared—not the people packed inside the Faith chapel at Arlington Memorial in Quezon City; not the spillover crowd huddled in white tents outside the main entrance

FOR THE LOVE/ A4

Second
FRONTPAGE

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(All in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45
(6) (12) (15) (23) (29) (38)
P5,020,945.20

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly clourainshowers.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Occasional Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Mostly Cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Mostly Cloudy
Calapan	Occasional Rains	**Davao**	Mostly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: SCHATZI QUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/08/15/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

US troops doing 'site survey'–AFP

By Christine O. Avendaño and Norman Bordadora

UNITED STATES SPECIAL FORCES troops that were seen leading a military convoy in Sulu on Tuesday were there to do a "site survey" in preparation for joint military exercises between Philippine and US troops next year, according to the military.

"I was informed that the reason for the mission of the troops is that they are going to conduct site survey in areas where there will be humanitarian assistance and Balikatan activities," AFP information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro told reporters yesterday.

Bacarro said the joint exercises, called the Balikatan, are to be held in Sulu next year.

He said the US soldiers seen last Tuesday belonged to the Joint Special Operations Task Force for the military exercises.

As to why the US forces were doing the site survey at a time when the military was engaged in a hunt for Abu Sayyaf extremists, Bacarro said that it was normal practice for the Philippine and US forces to conduct their planning for the joint exercises quite early.

For one thing, they would have to identify the Balikatan-related projects that would be needed by a barangay and how much it would cost, he said.

"Definitely they are not involved in combat operations," he said.

He said US soldiers have been helping the ongoing operations against the Abu Sayyaf by providing "technical intelligence, training for soldiers and civil military-related activities."

On Tuesday, an Agence France-Presse photographer filmed US troops aboard an armored vehicle mounted with a machine gun, with a miniature US flag clearly visible on the back of one soldier's helmet. The US troops were part of a convoy of Philippine Marines.

Lee McClenny, a US Embassy spokesperson, said the Americans in Sulu were mostly from the Special Forces and "are not involved in any combat roles."

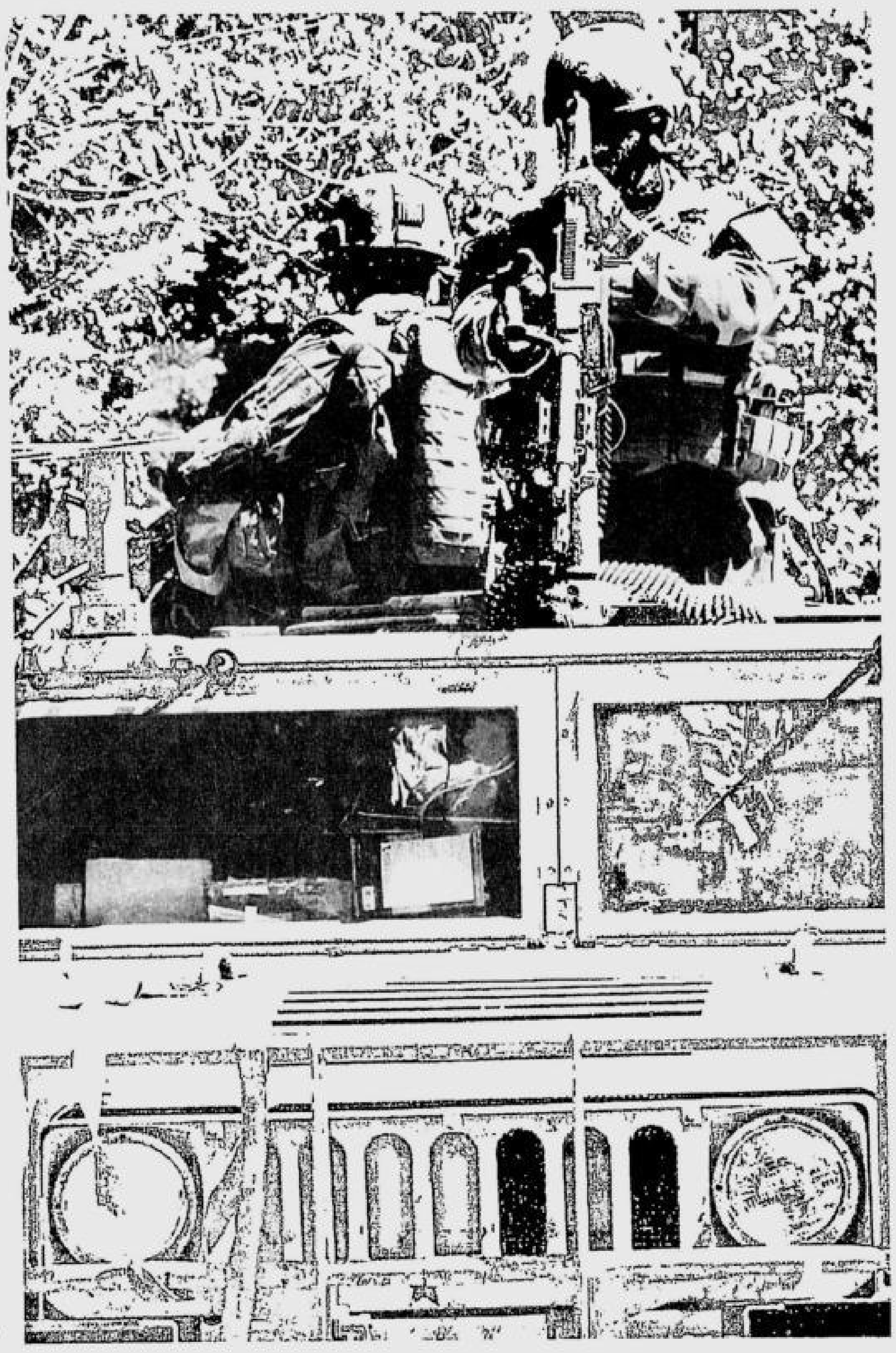
Under the Visiting Forces Agreement governing the conduct of visiting US troops, US soldiers are banned from actual combat, but both governments say they provide training and intelligence to Filipino troops going after the Abu Sayyaf.

President Macapagal-Arroyo last week ordered a limited military offensive in Jolo and Basilan islands following heavy military losses in recent ambushes.

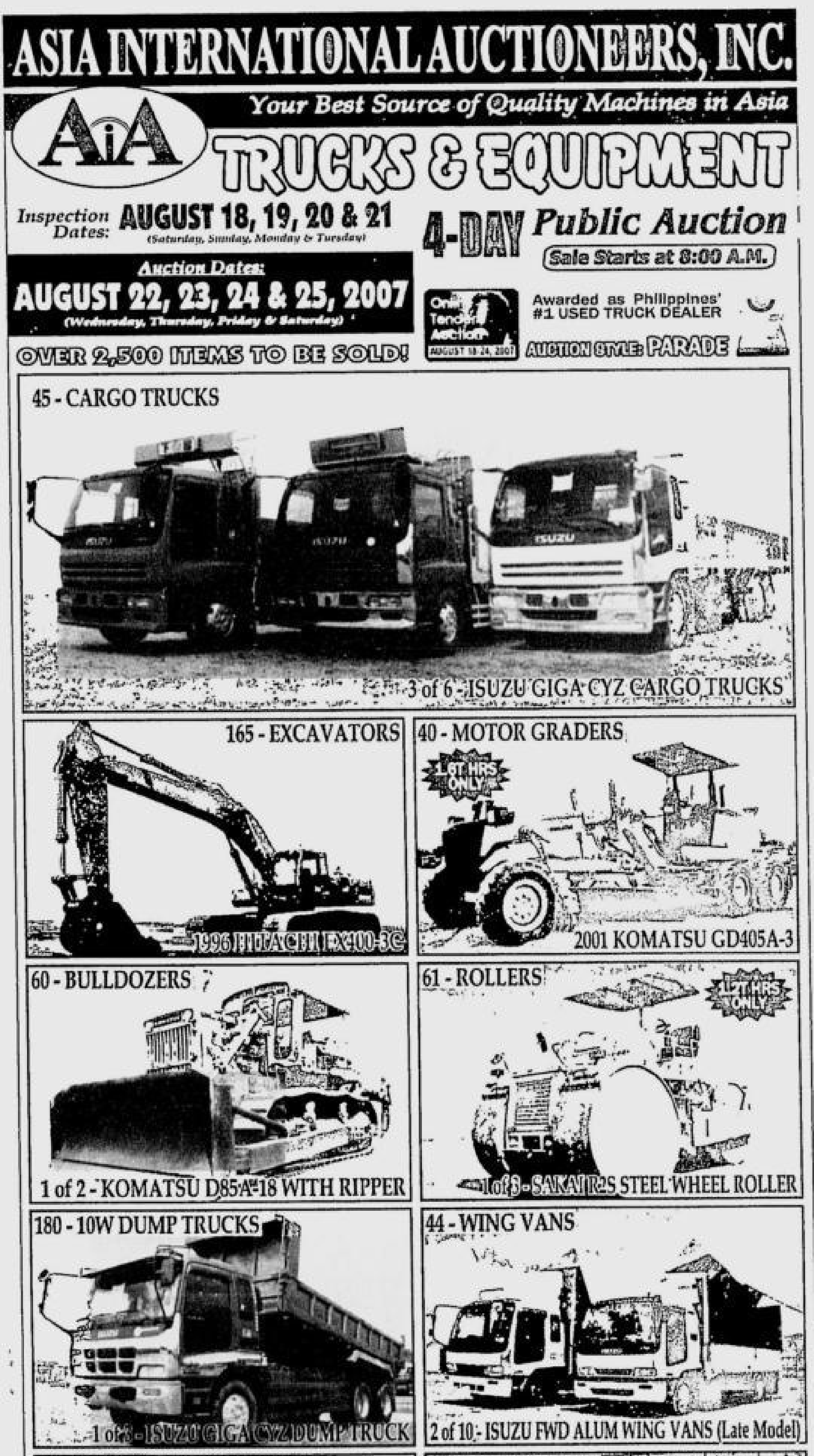
In Jolo, heavily armed soldiers are hunting Abu Sayyaf leaders Abu Pula, Radulan Sahiron and Albader Purad, whose group clashed with government troops last week, resulting in the death of 27 Army soldiers, 11 of whom were killed in an ambush in Maimbung town.

Yesterday, elite Philippine troops trained by US Special Forces began arriving in Jolo, joining some 5,000 Army troops already on the island.

More than 100 Scout Rangers arrived and headed to the west coast town of Indanan, close to where the 27 soldiers soldiers were killed, said an AFP photographer on the scene.



US Special Forces soldiers aboard a US military humvee jeep seen on a convoy with Philippine Marine troops in Indanan, Jolo, Tuesday. AFP



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More Mattel toys pulled out of local shelves due to hazards

By Ronnel W. Domingo

EIGHTEEN DIFFERENT MATTEL toys, among them several types of the popular Polly Pocket! and Batman playsets, were pulled off local shelves yesterday amid an expanded global recall due to lead and magnet hazards. (*See related story in The World, Page A20.*)

This was the second time in two weeks that stores like Toys "R" Us and Toy Kingdom removed products of Mattel Inc., one of the biggest toy makers in the world, over reports that the paint used in some toys contained lead above allowable limits. Others were found to contain small, powerful magnets that children might swallow.

The California-based toy giant said in a statement yesterday that it had voluntarily recalled 19.8 million magnetic toys made from 2002 through Jan. 31, 2007 since November last year. The most recent recall involves some toys manufactured up to Aug. 9 this year.

In the Philippines, the recalled toys include Polly Pocket! playsets made in 2006 or earlier. These include those called Pollyworld Dial A Style; Pollyworld Rockin' Theme Park; assorted pieces of Pollyworld Rock Theme Park; Pollyworld Dress And Drive Lounge Playset; Totally Beadiful; Pollywood Limo Vehicle; Polly Pocket Sticking To Style; pieces for the Pollyworld Dial A Song; Pollyworld Park Pals; Polly Pocket Twirl N Swirl Beauty; Polly Pocket! Quick Click Playset; Mermaid Stars Playset; Quick Click House of Style; Polly Pocket! Quick Click Penthouse; and Polly Pocket Quick Click Boutique.

Also recalled were the The Batman Magnet Lok System playset as well as Magna Battle Armor, Batman and Fight Wing Batman playsets made from June 11, 2006 to Aug. 9, 2007.

Sarge toys (an army jeep) from the "Cars" die-cast vehicle line made between March 2007 and July 2007 were also recalled.

Particularly for Philippine vendors, Mattel ordered the pullout of the two-and-a-half-inch Sarge toys that were manufactured from Jan. 1 to July 27 this year.

Mattel advised buyers to immediately take the recalled products away from children and contact the company to arrange return and choose a replacement toy of equivalent value.

Rosabel Tejam, assistant vice president of the Philippine franchise of Toys "R" Us, said Mattel's Hong Kong office issued the recall Tuesday night and the products were off the local shelves when stores opened Wednesday.

Jim Walter, Mattel's senior vice president for worldwide quality assurance said the expanded recall "is not due to reports of injuries but rather increased reports of loose magnets and Mattel's new and more rigorous standards for magnet retention."

3 more 'transition homes' set for underage law offenders

By Volt Contreras

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has approved the release of P50 million to construct more "transition homes" for underage law offenders, as a follow-on measure to her recent order directing authorities to release minors from regular jails.

The fresh funds will be used by the Department of Social Welfare and Development to build three more rehabilitation centers in as many regions and open a fourth facility in Metro Manila, Secretary Esperanza Cabral told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The regions that will be given new juvenile rehab facilities are Cagayan Valley (Region II), Southwestern Mindanao (XII) and the Cordillera Autonomous Region. In Metro Manila, one more will be added to the existing centers in Pasay, Quezon City and Manila.

The centers will house youth offenders shielded from criminal prosecution under the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006.

The new law says young offenders should not be punished like ordinary criminals but be allowed to undergo a rehabilitation program for six months to a year, or until they are deemed fit to be sent back to their families.

Cabral said the law calls for the rehabilitation of young offenders in properly designated homes. But for lack of such facilities, they are often just sent home and monitored by social workers in the community.

Cabral conceded that some members of the community are not comfortable with this arrangement.

"That's why we are improving the services of our transition homes and increasing their capacity, so that more can be accommodated and then released only when they are ready," she said.

With the P50 million, the target is for the regional centers to house up to 100 wards each, and for the new center in Metro Manila to have room for as many as 250, she said.

Ms Arroyo last month ordered the justice department and the Public Attorneys Office to work on the release of youth offenders who were still in jail despite the enactment of the law in April 2006.

Her order particularly cited offenders who were aged 15 years and below at the time of the crime.

FILIPINO boxers (from left) AJ Banal, Michael Domingo, Ray "Boom Boom" Bautista and Z Gorres proudly show the Boxing World Cup they won upon arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Wednesday from Los Angeles, California. JESS YUSON

Winner's pride no prize money can ever match

By Tarra Quismundo

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A SWEEP BUT for one lost bout but that did not diminish the overwhelming triumph felt by the Filipino boxers who won the Boxing World Cup over Mexico last Sunday.

Counting no man out, four of the six Filipino boxers who scored a 5 to 1 win over Mexico in the six-bout spectacle in Sacramento, California, returned home to a rainy city yesterday, but dispelling the gloom with what they brought back—the gem-studded golden Boxing World Cup trophy.

Almost three days after their victory, boxers AJ Banal, Michael Domingo, Z Gorres and Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista came home with the $500,000 trophy and a victor's pride that no prize money could ever match.

Pride and honor

"We are proud because we got the cup and we really worked hard so that we could wave our flag," Gorres told reporters in Filipino.

"Filipino honor can never be bought," said Bautista.

For Domingo, the win was worth every minute of the grueling training they all underwent.

"Our training was really hard. We experienced hardships in America. We endured missing our families just to get this World Cup because our nation counts on us in a fight between two countries of boxing warriors. We trained hard just so we can bring this home," Domingo said in Filipino.

Teammate Gerry Peñalosa is said to be coming home today while there has been no word yet about when Davao City native Diosdado Gabi would return.

Surprise defeat

The team's only setback was the surprise defeat of Bohol's Bautista, whose shocking first-round knockout bungled his mission to steal the WBO Junior Featherweight title from Mexican Daniel Ponce de Leon.

"We went to a war, Philippines vs Mexico. And in every war, regardless what it is, you've got casualties. And we have one. We have Boom Boom. But with that, he will bring strength to the country. I know that the Filipinos will love Boom Boom even in defeat," said Sampson Lewkowicz, regarded as an international boxing "matchmaker."

Bittersweet homecoming

It was a bittersweet homecoming for Bautista, whose mood shifted from sunny to despondent to optimistic whenever asked about his loss.

He said that even when his hand hurt , he continued with the fight "because I knew that it was the name of our country that was at stake … We still brought home the World Cup and I'm very proud that the Philippines won."

Bautista, who was earlier reported as having decided to retire, may well be on his way back as former boxer and now promoter Oscar de la Hoya has signed him up for a three-year contract with Golden Boy Promotions.

Jinggoy's temporary liberty upheld by SC

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS UPheld Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's temporary liberty granted to him in 2003 by the Sandiganbayan, which earlier reasoned that the preliminary evidence against him for plunder was weak.

Estrada is being tried as a co-accused in the P4-billion plunder case of his father, deposed President Joseph Estrada. The verdict on their case is expected to be handed down soon.

According to the high tribunal, Estrada could be granted bail because he has not been shown to be a flight risk, even four years after he was provisionally released.

The high court, in its Aug. 10 decision, said Estrada's election to a six-year Senate term on May 10, 2004. lessens, if not removes, any risk of him escaping.

It also said the issue tackled when the Sandiganbayan decided to grant bail to Estrada was whether the evidence so far against him was enough to keep him in detention during trial.

It added that the grant of temporary liberty does not stop the Sandiganbayan from appreciating all the evidence presented during the trial.

It also noted that the Sandiganbayan found that there was a possibility that if convicted, he would not be sentenced to death or reclusion perpetua, and this finding boosts its ruling to grant bail.

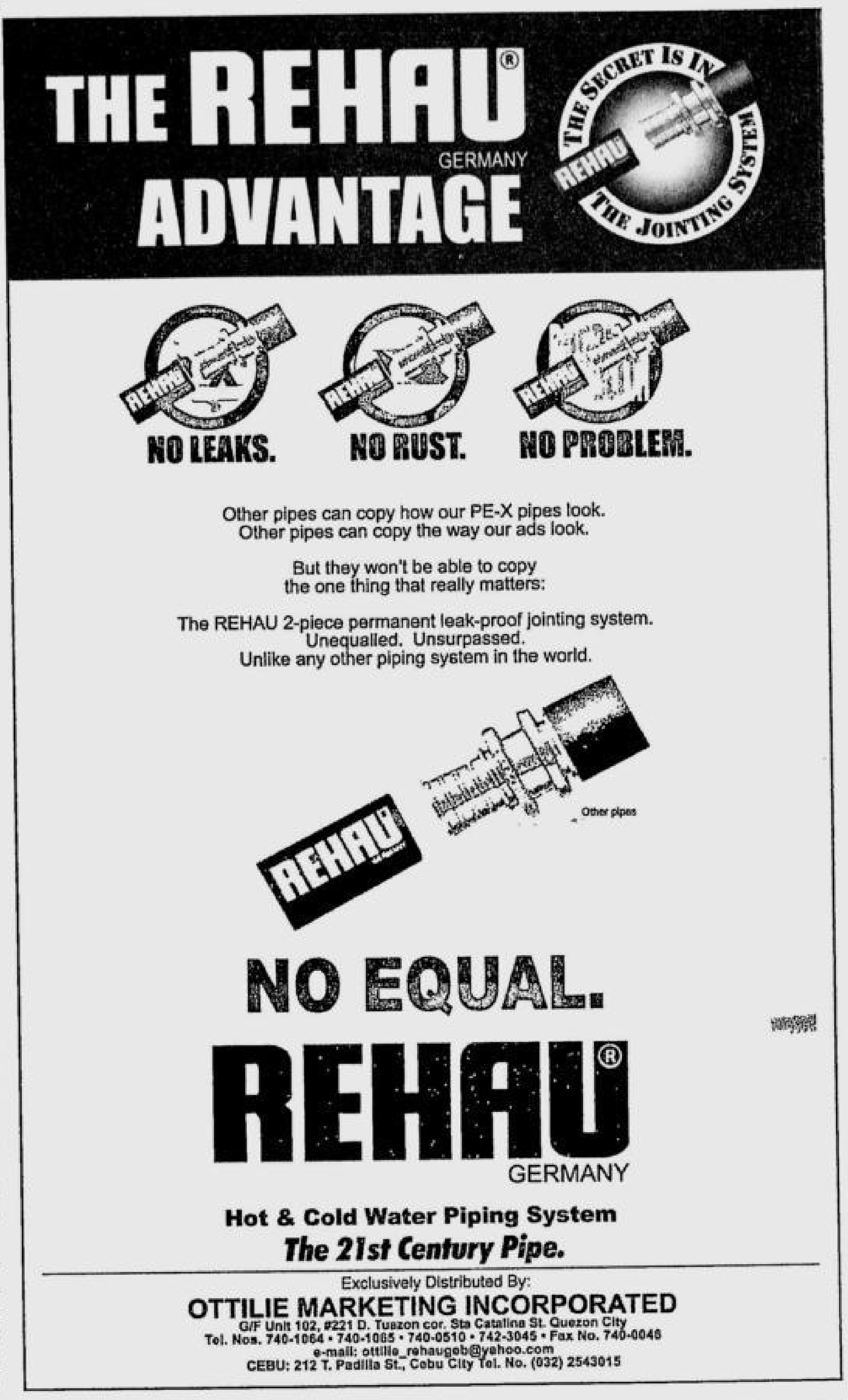
The high court also junked the prosecution's argument that Estrada should have been kept in jail during trial because of overlapping conspiracies.

The prosecution said Estrada was not only liable for conspiring with his father in acquiring ill-gotten wealth from "jueteng," but was also connected with the conspiracy to divert the tobacco excise tax and to receive kickbacks from the purchase of Belle Corporation shares.

Hence, the prosecution said all those in the conspiracy loop should be considered charged with the same kind of nonbailable offense as Estrada's father Joseph, the central figure.

But the high court said the prosecution wrongly equated the provisional grant of bail to Estrada's virtual acquittal in the plunder case.

The court added that the Sandiganbayan was still studying the merits of the case.



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More bills on cheaper medicines

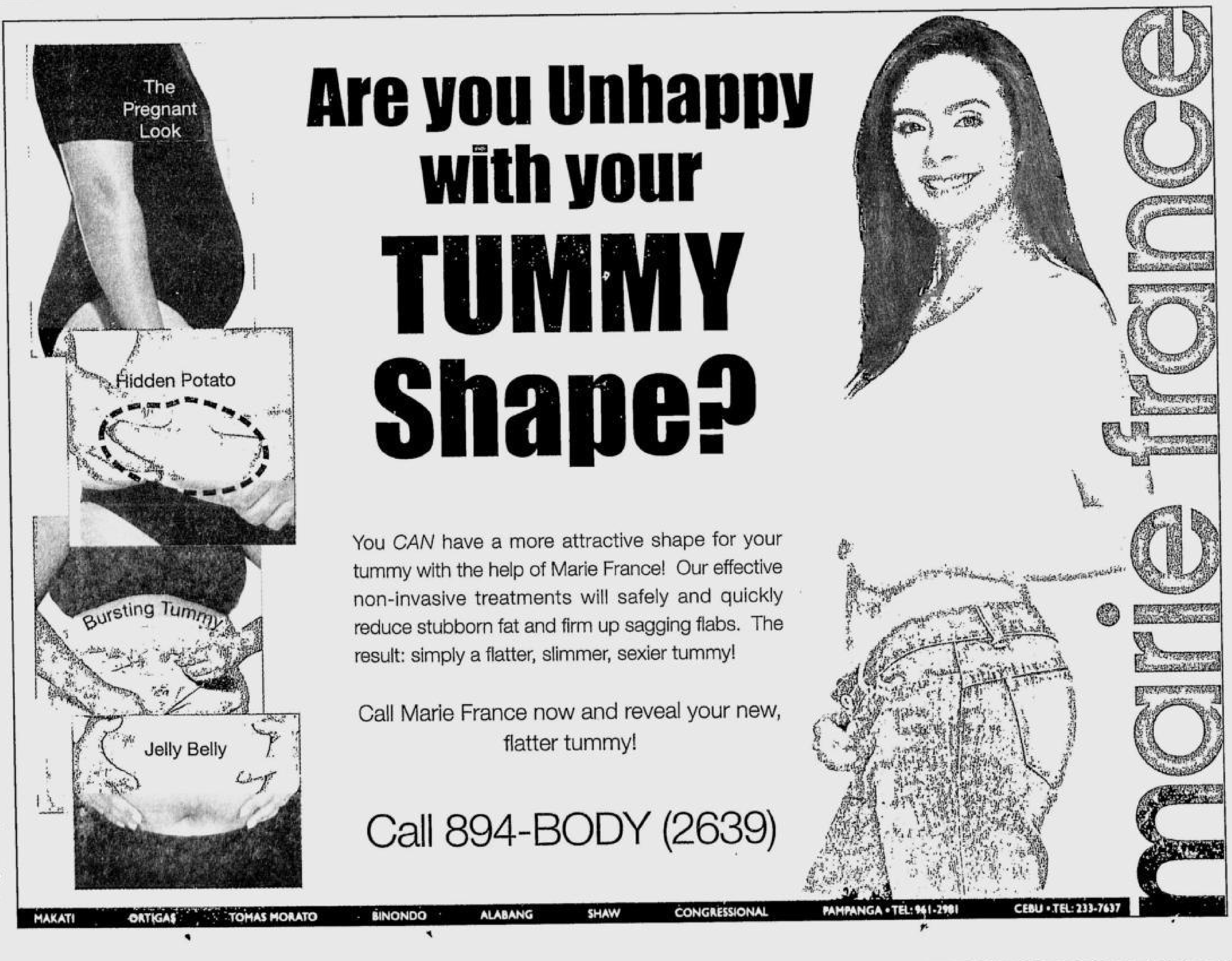
WILL THE 14TH Congress finally reward Filipinos with access to cheaper medicines?

At least 16 bills intended to reduce the prices of medicines in the country have been filed at the House of Representatives as of Aug. 7, said Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros, herself main author of two of the measures.

The bills took a number of routes toward the same purpose, including the amendment to the Intellectual Property Code to allow parallel importation and the establishment of a drug price regulation system.

"We have a very rich field of bills to work from," Hontiveros told colleagues at yesterday's "Legislators' Forum on Improving Access to Medicines in the Philippines" at the Batasan Complex.

"One bill can't bring down the prices of medicines," Hontiveros said in explaining the filing of several bills. *Christian V. Esguerra*



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Ms Esperon hurting: My voice just sounded loud

From page A1

angry at the INQUIRER for what she described as the "damage" inflicted on her by its report. But she eventually agreed to be interviewed on the sidelines of the Defense Press Corps photo awards at Camp Aguinaldo so she could give her side.

Esperon said that after hearing no special mention of the fallen soldiers at the Mass, she and some friends went to see the military chaplain, Fr. Albert Songco.

"I cried in front of Father Songco [and told him], *'Kailangan lang magbayad ako ng P50 bawat patay para maipamisa natin itong mga namatay na sundalo natin* (Do I have to pay P50 for each of our dead soldiers so we can have a Mass said for them)?' *Yun ang aking kwestyon* (That was my question)," Esperon said, adding that she had always offered Masses for her deceased parents and brother and would pay P50 for each of them.

Songco replied that she did not have to pay such a fee.

Speaking loudly

Esperon then told him she felt sad that, during the Mass, there was no mention of the fallen soldiers to allow the churchgoers to pause for a minute and pray for them.

"Ganun lang (That was it), as simple as that, *tapos gagawan ako ng kwento* (and then a report will be made of me)," Esperon said.

She said she was speaking loudly at that time, not because she was angry but because her voice was actually hoarse from talking with soldiers in a previous engagement.

Esperon said her father had taught her to do charity work.

She said this was why she had been active in looking after the concerns and needs of soldiers and their families.

"I even tried to purchase, from my own pocket, hepatitis vaccine for the protection of the soldiers," said Esperon, a physician by profession.

She also said she was part of a group of generals' wives who had been active in "uplifting the lives of soldiers."

"COMMANDER" of the AFP chief of staff: Dr. Lorna Esperon led the celebration of Mass for soldiers killed in Sulu on Tuesday at the St. Ignatius Cathedral in Camp Aguinaldo after she was reportedly incensed that the names of the 27 soldiers were not mentioned during the Mass last Sunday in the same church. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Lifting morale

"We are [conducting] medical missions. I bring a group of reservist doctors to the field. I also bring medicine," she said.

The generals' wives have embarked on other activities for the benefit of soldiers, including launching singing contests for them and enrolling their own wives in medical transcription courses, according to Esperon.

She said the group had produced a CD of songs for the soldiers "through the charity of Mon del Rosario," in order to "uplift their morale."

She acknowledged that she was doing all these because there were still opportunities to do so until her husband, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., retires in February 2008.

Just yesterday, she said, she visited 2nd Lt. Ariel Toledo, the valedictorian of Philippine Military Academy Class of 2006, who is being treated for liver cancer at the AFP Medical Center in Quezon City.

She said that when she visited Toledo, she brought tapes and sang to him: *"Ngumiti* (He smiled). Those are my inspirations. *Kapag nakikita ko nguminigiti ang pasyente, lumuluwag ang pakiramdam ko* (Whenever I see a patient smile, I feel a load off my shoulders).

"Masama ba yun (Is that wrong)? Doing good for the soldiers, *masama ba yun?*

'I'm not guilty'

"I'm sincere in my vocation. This is a vocation for me, because I was raised by my father, a retired US Navy [man], to do charity work. I didn't [get into the medical] profession to earn money; this is purely for service."

Esperon also denied having anything to do with the resignation of Col. Adrian Quidlat, chief of the AFPMC Orthopedic Department.

She said her husband had told Quidlat that the latter would be promoted to general "as long as he fulfills the requirement [of being] assigned to the field."

But Quidlat did not go to the AFP Southern Command for field assignment because he had to attend to his family, according to Esperon.

"I did not have Colonel Quidlat relieved," she said.

Esperon also sought to make it clear that she had nothing against the INQUIRER.

"This is for the record," she said, adding that she was not guilty and not angry, only hurt when she woke up and read the report.

She also said that her husband had spoken with her about it, and that she had never hidden anything from him.

"Hindi ako galit sa inyo. Masama lang nadama ko paggising ko. Sabi ko, I'm not guilty. *Kinausap ako ni* CS (chief of staff). *Wala akong hini*-hide *dyan,"* she said.

For the love of Pete, stars, old and new, sing their hearts out

From page A1

who watched the proceedings on a video wall.

Laugh or cry, sing or mope? It seemed like an easy choice for that audience, family and friends who had come to bid Pete Roa "good night, not goodbye," with his favorite songs.

Let alone pop headliners Gary Valenciano, Marissa Sanchez, and "Miss Saigon" alumni Isay Alvarez, Robert Seña and Jenine Desiderio, the best of the country's veteran showmen turned up for the unusual concert.

Jose Mari Chan couldn't say it enough: "I have never sung in a wake before." He proceeded to sing "Unspoken" and, when asked for more, did another old radio hit, "Again." His audience of, he jested, "average age 38" sang along.

Out of punch lines

Jun "Mr. Shooli" Urbano, Pete's childhood buddy, was out of punch lines for once. He sang "What a Wonderful World" a la Louis Armstrong, the better to conceal the crack in his voice (he succeeded only a little).

Leo Martinez was his rowdy Batangueño *politico* character only for a few moments. His rendition of "The Impossible Dream" was not pitch-perfect, but delivered with as much heart as Congressman Manhik-Manaog could never muster.

Willie Nepomuceno likewise came as himself, and sang "The Second Time Around," punctuating his performance with salutes to Pete's life-size portrait behind him.

"If you know the lyrics and feel like singing with me," Noel Trinidad said by way of introducing his number, "'*Wag na lang*. It's been a while since I last performed. This is my moment." Whereupon, he launched into a wistful rendition of "Don't Worry 'Bout Me."

In one corner of the room, beside the pianist, Ariel Ureta was heckling the performers, sparing no one. Apparently moved, he took a few seconds before pouncing on Noel.

OLDIES BUT GOODIES: The Wing Duo (Nikki Ross and Angie Yoingco) flank Pilita Corrales during the smashing musical tribute to Pete Roa by his colleagues in the biz. RUDY ESPERAS

BOOTS ANSON-ROA: On the verge of tears, the widow keeps a touch of the Pete humor saying her only worry is that her husband might feel compelled to say thanks personally. RUDY ESPERAS

Richard Merck's gift

One of Pete's hangouts had been Merk's jazz bar at Greenbelt 3 in Makati. He would ask to be brought there, in his wheelchair, when his friend Annie Brazil was in town and performing. On Monday night, Richard Merck brought his "Tito" Pete "a gift."

Merck's mom Annie, visiting from New Jersey, allowed herself to cry before she even spoke. "I meant to see you, my friend," she said, glancing at the coffin to her left. She was under the weather herself, suffering an attack of emphysema.

Even so, she sang "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" with nary a breath out of sync, tears still streaming down her face.

Richard and his sister Rachel Ann Wolfe also took turns at the mic.

When Elizabeth Ramsey's name was called, everyone braced for a riotous break. She did not disappoint. Between "Buhat" and "Who Can I Turn To?" she "confessed" to previous "indiscretions" committed with her departed friend. "He can't confirm or deny this," she said in Visayan-laced Tagalog, "because he's dead. Just keep the missus away from me."

Not a few were sure this was the climax of the evening's program.

The good old days

But "a lady who always bent over backwards, literally, to make Pete smile" was called next. Pilita Corrales walked up from the back of the room and sang a Spanish ditty, but refused to execute her signature contortions, saying, "'*Kakahiya naman*." Wait, it got better: Her second number was with Nikki Ross and Angie Yoingco, also known as the Wing Duo, her Clover Theater colleagues.

Their "Hernando's Hideaway," an otherwise upbeat piece, left many misty-eyed. A virtual bubble above the heads bobbing to the beat read, "Ah, the good old days." (The trio missed another Clover pal, German Moreno, by just a half hour.)

At evening's end, an exhausted-looking but still smiling Boots Anson-Roa stood at the chapel's door, thanking the performers on their way out. Inside, it didn't look like the singing would stop anytime soon. Merck had brought a Sinatra songbook and non-pros had started to mill around the weary pianist.

"My only worry now," Boots said, grinning, "is that Pete might feel compelled to say thanks—in person."

Pete's remains were cremated the following day, and will be interred tomorrow at the St. Therese Columbarium in Villamor Air Base, Pasay City.

SC upholds validity of Smokey Mountain contract

From page A1

quire the reclaimed lands because there was no public bidding and that these were beyond the commerce of man. He argued that there was no declaration that the lands were needed for public use and that there was no law authorizing their sale.

The court found that the "JVA and all other agreements signed and executed in relation to it ... have been shown to be valid, legal and constitutional."

In an 82-page decision, the court added that the agreement's Phase II, which recommends the use of an incinerator, has been struck down by the Clean Air Act.

Essential NHA power

"It is unequivocal that reclamation of land in the Smokey Mountain area is an essential and vital power of the NHA to effectively implement its avowed goal of developing low-cost housing units at the Smokey Mountain dumpsites," the court said.

Rejecting Chavez's claim that only the Public Estates Authority (PEA) could reclaim foreshore and submerged lands, the court said Executive Order No. 525 on PEA did not say this power was exclusive.

The court said the JVA met the conditions under the said EO 525 allowing the NHA to reclaim land. First, two Presidents—Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos—approved the reclamation of the area across R-10 through a private sector joint venture.

Ramos also authorized the increase of the reclamation area for the housing project from 40 hectares of foreshore and submerged land of Manila Bay to 79 hectares.

PEA endorsement

The second condition, PEA's endorsement, was also present because its general manager was a member of the executive committee tasked to supervise the project's implementation.

The third element, requiring the reclamation to be undertaken by the PEA or by the national government agency authorized to do so, was also present because the NHA was empowered to undertake such a task.

The high court also disagreed with Chavez's claim that the reclaimed lands were given by NHA to RBI by negotiated contract and not by public bidding as the law requires.

It noted that RBI had won the right to become NHA's partner for the Smokey Mountain project through a public bidding.

Right to transfer land

It also said the lands that NHA conveyed to RBI were not lands of the public domain, the sale of which requires public bidding. It said the reclaimed lands became propriety lands or patrimonial properties of the State upon transfer of their titles to the NHA.

"The NHA can therefore legally transfer patrimonial land to RBI or to any other interested qualified buyer without any bidding conducted by the Director of Lands because the NHA, unlike PEA, is a government agency not tasked to sell lands of public domain. Hence, it can only hold patrimonial lands and can dispose of such lands by sale without need of public bidding," the court said.

It also said the NHA was empowered to transfer properties it acquired to other parties, hence there was no need for a law to authorize the sale of reclaimed lands.

The high court found no merit in Chavez's contention that the reclaimed lands could not be acquired by the private contractor because there was no declaration these were not needed for public use.

It said there was an "implicit executive declaration" that the said lands were not necessary for public use when the President conveyed it to the NHA.

3 proclamations

It also said the reclaimed lands for the Smokey Mountain project have been declared alienable or disposable by three presidential proclamations, among others.

The high court debunked Chavez's claim that DENR did not authorize NHA and RBI to reclaim land. It said the authority to do so came from the President, which has power over the DENR.

"Thus, as in this case, when the President approved and ordered the development of a housing project with the corresponding reclamation work, making DENR a member of the committee tasked to implement the project, the required authorization from the DENR to reclaim the land can be deemed satisfied," it said.

The tribunal added that requiring DENR authorization when the President has given her say-so would be a derogation of her powers.

The court also said it could not stop the project because Chavez failed to exhaust all remedies before he brought the matter to the Supreme Court.

Chavez missed his chance

It pointed out that Chavez was the solicitor general when the Smokey Mountain project was formulated and implemented but he did not question it. "The moment to challenge the project had passed," it said.

The JVA between the NHA and RBI has been terminated pursuant to a memorandum of agreement (MOA) signed by the two parties on Aug. 27, 2003. Under the MOA, the NHA would compensate RBI.

In a statement, Reghis Romero II, chair and founder of RII Builders, welcomed the court decision, saying it would provide "a solid propeller to push ahead with our goals for social and economic development."

He said the project would serve as a "showcase for poverty alleviation and social transformation woven within a viable business proposition."

WHAT WENT BEFORE

IN 1992, PRESIDENT CORAZON Aquino issued Memorandum Order No. 415, directing the National Housing Authority to enter into a joint venture scheme that would pave the way for the construction of low-cost housing for residents of the infamous Smokey Mountain dumpsite in Manila.

The administration of Fidel V. Ramos witnessed the signing of a joint venture agreement between NHA and R-II Builders Inc. on March 19, 1993. The agreement created the Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project, which involved the construction of 30 buildings that would house over 3,000 families.

Both sides agreed there would be no budget outlay from the government. Because R-II was to spend for the entire project, it was given the right to own 79 hectares of reclaimed land. Amendments to the contract increased to 229 hectares the portion of reclaimed land R-II could own.

Asset pool arrangements

But the developer, which was said to have a paid-up capital of only P500,000, ran out of funds in 1994. It then entered into an Asset Pool Arrangement with government agencies.

In exchange for Smokey Mountain Project Participation Certificates, the Social Security System, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Land Bank of the Philippines, Home Guarantee Corp., HGC Provident Fund, Philippine National Bank, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. and other financial institutions pooled assets totaling more than P3 billion to bankroll the project.

The project still came to a standstill in 1998 because of lack of funds. In 2002, the Arroyo administration released P480 million for the continuance of the project, on condition that the contracts with R-II would be canceled.

Contract terminated

On Aug. 27, 2003, the original contract was terminated. But the government promised to pay the developer P250 million, to be taken from the P480-million fund, to settle partially the expenses R-II had incurred.

The following year, former Solicitor General Frank Chavez filed a petition before the Supreme Court seeking to declare null and void the original agreement. He argued that it was illegal for a private corporation to acquire public land.

Taking off on the petition, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said Ramos, among others, could be held liable for malversation of funds because his administration made government agencies pour money into the project that should have been shouldered solely by R-II.

In October 2004, R-II asked the high court to dismiss Chavez's petition for lack of merit, adding that some of the government agencies that helped fund the Smokey Mountain project even earned millions. Earlier that year, however, then Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said Owwa had yet to recover fully its investment in the project. *Cyril L. Bonabente, INQUIRER Research*

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Suspension over videoke bar inquiry

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG HAS SUSPENDED for three months a director of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for going to a videoke bar with department employees in the guise of conducting a fact-finding inquiry last November.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita signed the July 31, 2007 decision approving the suspension of Wayne Belizar, officer-in-charge of the Management Information Systems Service of the DSWD main office.

An investigation conducted by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) found Belizar guilty of simple misconduct, a violation of RA 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

The PAGC said that Belizar, "as a seasoned internal auditor and head of the fact-finding committee, should have known that a drinking session is not the proper occasion for the conduct of an investigation," more so if the venue is a videoke bar.

"This kind of irresponsibility will not be tolerated by his agency," said PAGC Chair Constancia de Guzman.

"Every public servant must always uphold the public interest and should think of the general welfare and integrity of the organization he represents first and foremost—over and above his personal interests," De Guzman said.

According to the PAGC investigation, Belizar, while on field work in San Fernando, Pampanga, went on a drinking spree with DSWD employees identified as Marlito del Rosario, Pepito Carpio and Jason Obrera, at the Dunhill videoke bar using a government vehicle, a Mitsubishi Adventure.

According to the police blotter, the videoke bar owner Irene Macapagal asked for police assistance at about 2 a.m. on Nov. 7, 2006 after Belizar and his companions refused to pay their bill.

"Their refusal to pay caused a heated argument with the owner whereupon Belizar bragged that he was a director of DSWD, while one of his companions kicked and destroyed properties inside the videoke bar," the PAGC said.

When Belizar .realized that the police was on their way, he instructed his driver, Carpio, to drive away.

In his defense, Belizar said he only agreed to go on a drinking spree "with the hope of eliciting more information from their alleged informant, Del Rosario," whom he believed would be helpful in the fact-finding investigation.

But the PAGC said that the information obtained from Del Rosario would have had more probative value if it had been documented and taken in the proper occasion and venue, "not while he is intoxicated and in a videoke bar with the members of the committee who are intoxicated as well."

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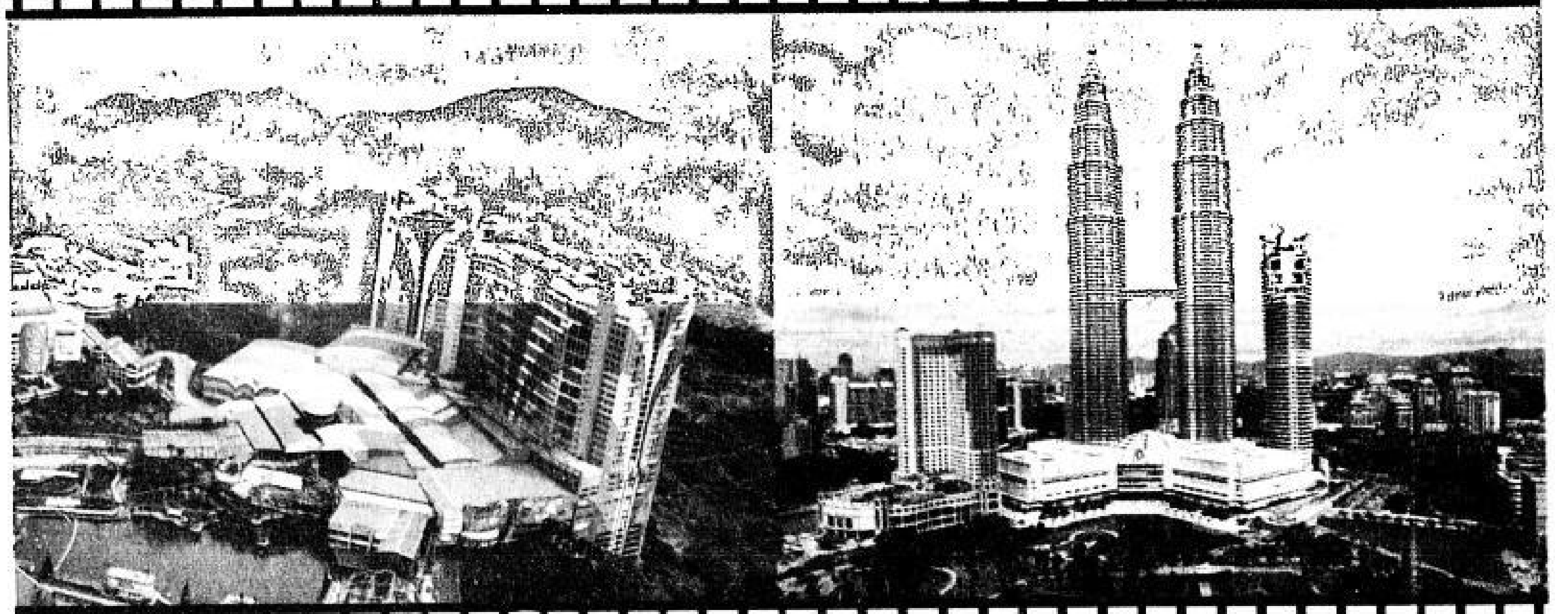
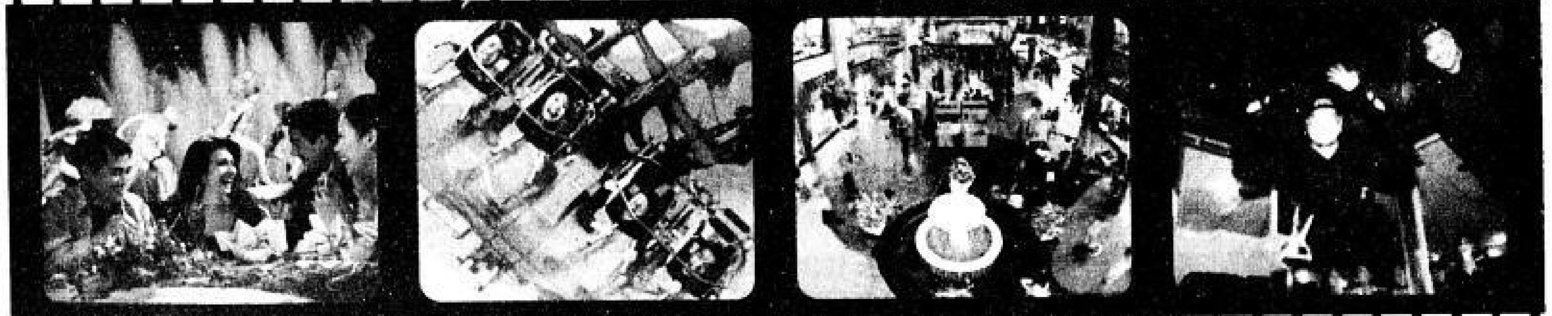
- 3N/4D KUL hotel accommodation
- Daily breakfast inside the hotel





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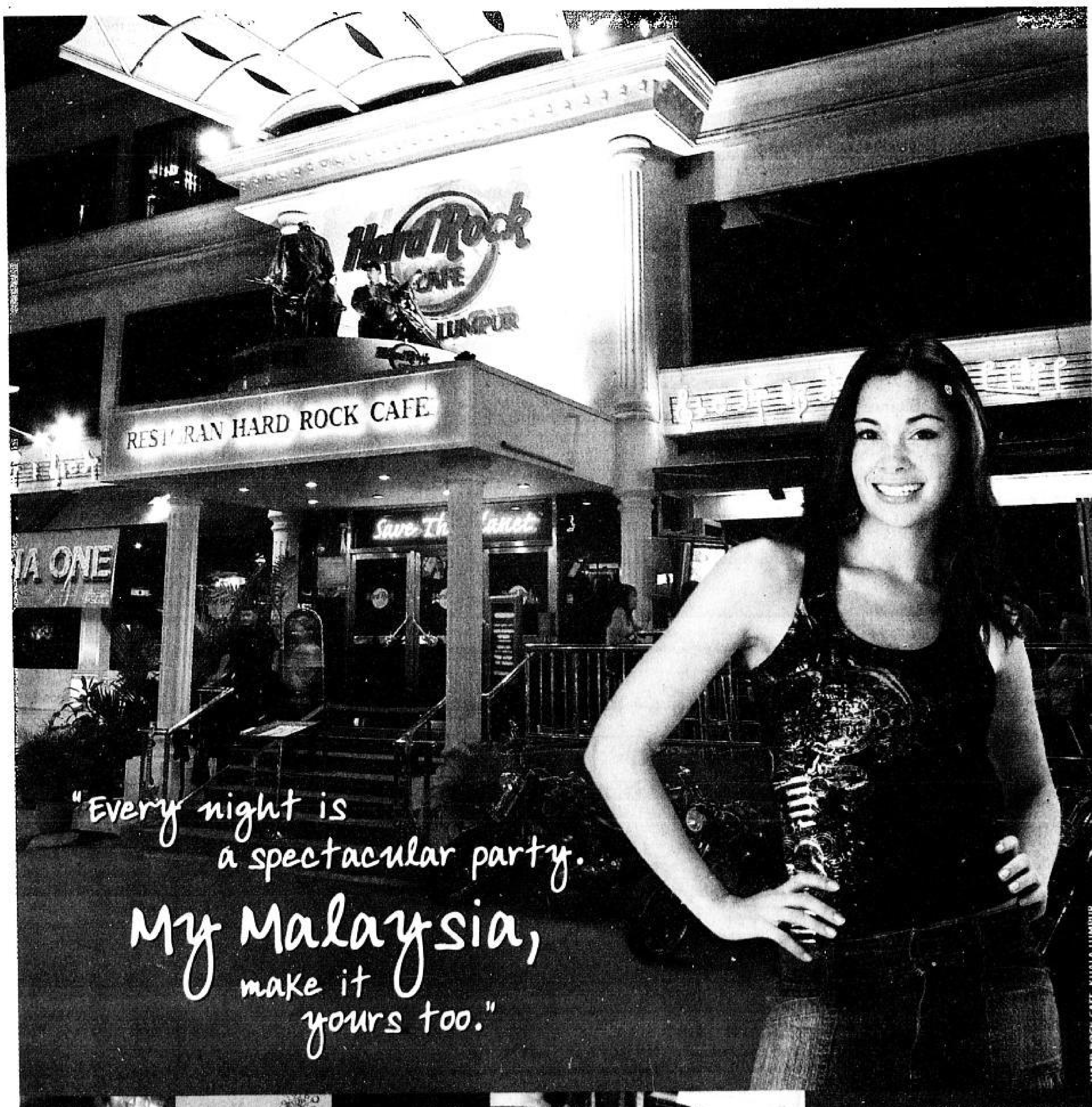
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GMA gets stuck in flood

From page A1

bomb-proof Mercedes Benz.

Still, Ms Arroyo was late for her appointments.

Ms Arroyo went a roundabout way from Malacañang to her two engagements in Eastwood, Libis, Quezon City and Camarin, Caloocan City, while her security escorts looked to no avail for a way to get her out of the jam.

She was late for an hour in her first appointment at the 11 a.m. inauguration of the Aditya Minacs Center in Eastwood.

Reporters who followed the presidential convoy said it was bright and sunny when they left Malacañang at 9:30 a.m.

But when the convoy was about to proceed toward Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard, a traffic jam greeted them and the convoy took a right turn toward Quirino Highway in Manila.

GRIDLOCK: Presidential convoy is stuck in Edsa on the way to the inauguration of the Aditya Minacs Center in Eastwood, Libis, Quezon City.

LYN RILLON

Great equalizer

The convoy traversed South Superhighway, Edsa in Makati City, went through Dasmariñas Village and McKinley Road and on to the C5 road—Ms Arroyo and her escorts were stuck for 30 minutes.

Ms Arroyo arrived past 11 a.m. in Eastwood and she was late again for the awarding of housing certificates in Barangay Camarin II in Caloocan City.

"It shows that when it comes to inconvenience of nature, no one is spared including the President. The flood is the great equalizer," remarked Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde.

Asked if Ms Arroyo—who is not exactly known for curbing her temper—rebuked anyone for the chaos, Presidential Security Group chief Brig. Gen. Romeo Prestoza said: "No, the President is reasonable. When these are (problems of) natural causes, she will not get angry at her officials."

Egay raged toward the Philippines about a week after Storms "Chedeng" and "Dodong" successively hit the fringes of Luzon and brought relief to many provinces suffering from a scorching heat brought on by a dry spell.

Egay's fury elicited comments from jokers that the country's Roman Catholic bishops—who had been holding nationwide prayers for rain after the drought deepened—may have prayed too fervently. *(Story on Page A16.)*

The fifth weather disturbance to hit the country this year and the third this month, Egay dumped 34.5 cm of rainfall in Quezon City after lashing the metropolis from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

No casualties have been reported as of press time.

"We do not discount the possibility that Egay will develop into a supertyphoon as it is still well within the ocean and may gain strength as it approaches land mass," weather specialist II Robert Rivera said.

Egay is roaring with center winds of 160 kph gusting up to 195 kph. A supertyphoon packs winds of 215 kph up.

The rainfall recorded from Egay was lower than the 100 mm rainfall recorded at the height of storm "Chedeng" last week but that was over a period of 24 hours.

"People perceived it (Egay) was very strong because it was a combination of thunderstorms and monsoon rains," supervising weather specialist Edito Cornelio said.

Blame it on garbage

Another supervising weather specialist of Pagasa, Rosalina de Guzman, rued: "We're always blamed if the rains trigger flash floods. This happens year in, year out, and that's because of our clogged canals."

"If you noticed, the countryside also experiences heavy rainfall, but does not suffer from floods."

NO-CLASSES MOOD: Children on Calasanz Street, Barangay Olympia, Makati City, enjoy the sudden school holiday on Wednesday by playing in the rain.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

LIFE GOES ON: An improvised raft ferries residents across a street submerged in floodwaters. Blocked drains turn roads into rivers with water in some parts of Metro Manila rising waist-high, causing major disruptions to the dailiness of life.

AFP

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, Egay was estimated to be 440 km east-northeast of Virac, Catanduanes, traveling westward at 15 kph toward Batanes and Taiwan.

Pagasa expects Egay to be 510 km southeast of Aparri, Cagayan by Thursday morning at its present speed.

Pagasa advised residents of Luzon and the Visayas regions to brace themselves for two days of rain with the possibility of Egay escalating into a supertyphoon.

Rivera said that based on Pagasa's weather monitoring, Egay could continuously drench Luzon, the National Capital Region and Eastern Visayas in the next two days.

"We expect that it will continue to rain starting Thursday until Friday. On Saturday, rainfall will be sporadic and hopefully skies will be clear by Sunday," Rivera told the INQUIRER.

No end yet to drought

The more intense the typhoon, the more pull it will have on the southwest monsoon and the closer it gets to the Philippine land mass, the more rain both weather phenomena will bring, Rivera said.

He urged residents of landslide and flood-prone areas to observe precautions or move to higher ground.

FATHER KNOWS BEST: A father keeps his daughter safe from floodwaters on a bike as he brings her to school. As usual, the announcement that classes at all levels were suspended came late.

AFP

He also said the typhoon did not signal the end of the dry spell.

"Region II remains at a critical stage because of the lack of rainfall and the Bicol Region (Region V) is still potentially endangered by the dry spell," Rivera pointed out.

No-class announcement late

Egay caused suspension of school classes and forced government and private offices to send home employees early. In Metro Manila, the suspension announcement came late, as pupils and students were already in school when it came.

The Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education suspended classes at all levels in public and private schools in Metro Manila.

Once again, the DepEd and CHEd announcements caught most students either when they were already in school or while on their way there.

Elementary, secondary and tertiary level schools shut down at around 9 a.m. following the suspension orders issued by Teresita Dimalanta, DepEd regional director for the National Capital Region, and her CHEd counterpart, Amelia Biglete.

Both the DepEd and the CHEd have the last say on the suspension of classes.

As rain pounded Manila, huge numbers of commuters were stranded because of the traffic and the floods that swamped main roads and streets.

A thunderstorm caused a brief power outage that stopped the MRT commuter train, forcing passengers to walk on the elevated railway to the nearest terminal.

Makeshift boats

Children were carried on their parents' shoulders to keep them above the water while others resorted to using makeshift rafts made from timber and styrofoam.

In September last year, Typhoon "Milenyo" brought Metro Manila to a near standstill. The strongest typhoon to directly hit Metro Manila in 11 years, Milenyo toppled trees and billboards, caused flash floods and landslides, and caused a Luzon-wide power outage.

With reports from Jerry E. Esplanada, AP and AFP

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GLORIA MARIS SHARK'S FIN RESTAURANT Greenhills Shopping Center, Ortigas Ave., Greenhills, San Juan City	Zhiming Huang	Specialty Chef
NEPA LENDING & TRADING CO. 5-E Gov. Pascual St., Sipac, Navotas, Metro Manila	Gurnam Singh	Purchaser
MORA AIR SERVICES INC. 2/F Manila Aero Club Bldg., Andrews Ave., Pasay City	Mohamed Siddig Elobaid Tayelseed	Pilot
HEWLETT-PACKARD AP (HONGKONG) LTD.-PHIL. ROHQ 37/F Robinson's Summit Center, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Varun Haresh Mukhi	ITO Support Specialist
KAN-YA INTERNATIONAL SERVICES CORPORATION Rm. 202-203 Krisambet Bldg., 1015 Zobel Roxas St., Sta. Ana, Manila	Hiroshi Sakae	Market Research and Development Officer
SYKES ASIA INC. 26/F Robinson's Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Erick Salvador Carcamo Servellon	Operations Director
ISAACTOAST CORPORATION 11 Commonwealth Village, Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City	Ki Sang Nam	Marketing Manager
PETRON CORPORATION Petron Mega Plaza, 358 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Khalid Dawood Al-Faddagh	President
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If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

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No graft case vs Heart Center exec

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS cleared Philippine Heart Center Director Ludgerio Torres of charges that he misused more than P700,000 of the hospital's funds that went into the payment of transfer tax duties and penalties to the Quezon City government in 2000.

The payments, which covered the transfer of a parcel of land owned by the Government Service Insurance System to the hospital, were later found to have been based on a fraudulent tax assessment.

Last year, the Office of the Ombudsman filed complaints of graft, malversation of public funds and falsification of public documents against Torres for allegedly authorizing the release of P714,708.75 in cash under a fake tax memorandum-assessment.

In clearing Torres, the antigraft court's First Division said it found no probable cause to indict the hospital director, as the alleged misappropriation of the money that was made with the use of fake documents was without his knowledge.

"The undue injury suffered by the government due to the loss of the [amount] was not caused by [Torres] in authorizing the release of the amount but ... was caused by the intervention of fraud," the court said in a decision penned by Presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo-de Castro.

The court, however, upheld a COA recommendation that Torres be held administratively liable for authorizing the payment of the amount in cash, contrary to the provisions of the Government Accounting and Auditing Manual.

Records showed that Torres ordered the purchase of a manager's check in the amount of P3.2 million payable to the Quezon City Treasurer's Office in December 2000 to cover the transfer tax based on a first assessment by the city assessor's office.

The check was, however, returned to the PHC along with an offer of an alternative assessment from Adonis Mella, one of the co-respondents in the case.

Mella's assessment reduced the original tax due to the city government to P1.91 million, which the PHC paid in the form of a manager's check for P1.27 million and P714,708.75 in cash.

However, Mella's assessment was later found to be fraudulent.

Torres maintained the transaction involving the amended tax penalty and the withdrawal of P714,708.75 for payment of the revised transfer tax assessment appeared legal and regular at face value.

He said the second assessment shown to him carried the official letterhead of the QC Treasurer's Office and that he had no way of verifying the authenticity of the documents.

He said his signature was not affixed on the withdrawal slip that was used to claim the amount from the Development Bank of the Philippines in September 2000 as he was on leave.

The slip was signed by the hospital's assistant director for administrative services, Zylma Sanchez, a co-respondent in the case.

Oppo 'shadow Cabinet'

THE OPPOSITION IN THE House of Representatives has started "a shadow Cabinet" that will look closely into the policy direction and operations of the Arroyo administration in the fields of national defense, justice, finance, energy, environment, education, science and other pertinent sectors.

Senior Deputy Minority Leader Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez and first-termer Cagayan De Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez said the House minority's shadow Cabinet will provide oversight functions and make suggestions on how departments should proceed regarding pressing issues.

Golez said he and his colleagues have yet to name the members of the House minority's shadow Cabinet but Rodriguez managed to tick off three. *Norman Bordadora*

Corrections

IN THE AUG. 12 ISSUE, a Global Pinoy article on Page A21—"Encounters with the illegally recruited"—misstated the name of an international classical concert pianist. The pianist's name is Corazon Pineda Kabayao—not Corazon Lopez-Kabayao.

* * *

IN THE AUG. 14 issue, a story on Page A4—"For 1st time, House elects woman deputy Speaker"—misstated that Occidental Mindoro Rep. Amelita Villarosa was the first woman to be elected House deputy Speaker. The distinction belongs to South Cotabato Rep. Daisy Fuentes who was elected House deputy Speaker for Mindanao in 1998.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com. ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, August 16, 2007
19th Week in Ordinary Time
Stephen of Hungary

1st Reading: Jos 3:7-10, 11, 13-17
Gospel: Matthew 18:21-19:1

Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how many times must I forgive the offenses of my brother or sister? Seven times?" Jesus answered, "No, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. This story throws light on the kingdom of heaven. A king decided to settle the accounts of his servants. Among the first was one who owed him ten thousand gold ingots. As the man could not repay the debt, the king commanded that he be sold as a slave with his wife, children and all his goods in payment.

The official threw himself at the feet of the king and said, 'Give me time, and I will pay you back everything.' The king took pity on him and not only set him free but even canceled his debt.

This official then left the king's presence and he met one of his companions who owed him a hundred pieces of silver. He grabbed him by the neck and almost strangled him, shouting, 'Pay me what you owe!' His companion threw himself at his feet and asked him, 'Give me time, and I will pay everything.' The other did not agree, but sent him to prison until he had paid all his debt.

His companions saw what happened. They were indignant and so they went and reported everything to their lord. Then the lord summoned his official and said, 'Wicked servant, I forgave you all that you owed when you begged me to do so. Weren't you bound to have pity on your companion as I had pity on you?' The lord was now angry, so he handed his servant over to be punished, until he had paid his whole debt."

Jesus added, "So will my heavenly Father do with you unless each of you sincerely forgive your brother or sister."

When Jesus had finished this teaching, he left Galilee and arrived at the border of Judea, on the other side of the Jordan River.

Commentary

The book of Joshua begins: the transition from the desert to being a people in the land. He summons the people to listen to the word of God and to remind them that the living God is in their midst as they enter the land. They go, carrying the ark of the Lord before them and the people cross the Jordan on land—a mini passage through the Red Sea. And the whole nation arrives at the end of their long journey from bondage to freedom. It has been a long and arduous time learning to be free.

Jesus teaches us that freedom is rooted in forgiveness—not counting how many times but as a lifestyle practiced in every regard towards everyone, always. God forgives us everything—what we could never repay (the debt in the Our Father that we ask forgiveness for)—and in exchange we must forgive others what they owe to us (the debt in the Our Father that we are required to forgive others who are in debt to us). This is a ground line requirement for Jesus' followers, the people of God, and God will treat us as sincerely as we have forgiven one another. Sobering and demanding, but freeing.

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

The National Housing Authority (NHA) is inviting prospective developers/proponents for the planning, development and disposition of the 30-hectare property in North Triangle Subdivision, Diliman, Quezon City, bounded on the North by MRT III Depot and TRINOMA, Northeastern portion by North Avenue, South by Manila Seedling Foundation, Inc., and Southwestern portion by EDSA. The prospective developers/proponents must have satisfactorily completed at least two (2) mixed-use development and marketing projects of prime properties of similar nature as to type and cost of the project under consideration. The project likewise includes provision of funding for the relocation of informal settlers thereat and development of offsite resettlement area.

Checklist of requirements for eligibility of the joint venture developers/proponents may be obtained upon submission of a letter of intent addressed to the Chairman, BAC, National Housing Authority, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php1,000.00. The eligibility documents are available for examination at the BAC Secretariat, 3rd Floor, NHA Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City. The BAC Secretariat may be contacted at Tel. Nos. 929-80-16 or 926-58-16.

Deadline of submission of eligibility documents shall be on August 31, 2007, not later than 10:00 a.m. at the Operations Center 3rd Floor, NHA Main Building.

Prospective developers/proponents shall be evaluated based on financial, technical, marketing and management capabilities and track record.

Bid documents and Terms of Reference shall be issued only to pre-qualified proponents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php50,000.00. Other schedule of bidding activities shall be informed through bid bulletin/s.

Minimum Bid Price is **P9.4415 Billion** (this cost includes rawland cost).

The developer/proponent with the most advantageous proposal to the Government shall be selected as the winning bidder for the project.

The NHA reserves the right to reject any or all bid offers, waive any required formalities and accept offers/applications most advantageous to the interest of the Government/Authority.

(Sgd.) **FROILAN R. KAMPITAN**
Assistant General Manager
BAC Chairperson

(PDI—August 16 & 23, 2007)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philippine Sugar Center Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of Personal and Notebook Computers

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)*, through its *2007 Corporate Operating Budget* intends to apply the sum of *P10,500,000.00* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *supply and delivery of Personal and Notebook Computers*, as follows:

Lot No.	Particulars	No. of Units	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
1	Personal Computers	288	10,080,000.00
2	Notebook Computers	6	420,000.00
	TOTAL		10,500,000.00

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The *NFA* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the *supply and delivery of Personal and Notebook Computers.* Delivery is required within 45 calendar days from receipt of notarized contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *NFA-BAC SECRETARIAT* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.*

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of P10,000.00 in the form of *CASH*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The following activities shall be conducted at the *NFA Board Room, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City.*

a) Pre-Bid Conference - August 28, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.
b) Bid Submission and Opening - September 11, 2007
   Submission of Bids – 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
   Opening of Bids - 2:00 p.m.

All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Required Amount In Percent of ABC
Cash, cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One percent (1%)
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
Surety Bond stamped "Callable on Demand" on the face of the Bond issued by GSIS	Two and a half percent (2.5%)
Any combination of the above	Proportionate to share

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.

The *NFA* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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(Sgd.) PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.
Deputy Administrator and BAC Chair
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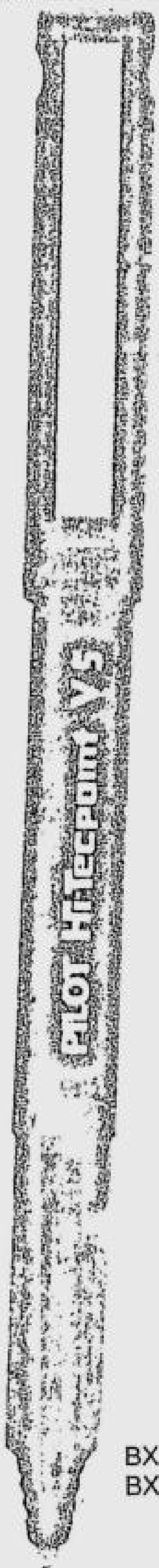
(PDI – August 16, 2007)



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Sino writer pays back nature, his life saver

From page A1

ly among the youth.

Exploring China's rich and vast nature reserves and studying how other countries were managing their national parks and wildlife refuges, he showed his country of 1.4-billion people how they could arrest further degradation and address the environmental crisis.

For this, he was chosen to receive the 2007 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Peace and International Understanding.

Tang was in his 50s—and on a new lease on life from Mother Nature when he embarked on his "green" career.

A student at Beijing Normal University in the infancy of the People's Republic, he became a political reporter for Beijing Daily in 1952, but was later denounced as a Rightist and was sentenced to hard labor in the countryside.

He survived, but his wife was beaten to death by the Red Guards, and for many years his two daughters were left to fend for themselves.

Nature also matchmaker

After his vindication in 1980, he started Great Nature magazine, which reported on China's nature protection zones. Retiring 10 years later, he traveled extensively, getting to know Mother Nature more intimately, wrote books and gave lectures on environmental issues.

He has authored nearly a dozen books, mostly with the support of and in collaboration with Marcia Bliss Marks, an American university lecturer whom he met during a nature trip and later married. Nature was also Tang's matchmaker.

The most well-known of these books is "A Green World Tour," regarded as the bible of China's young environmentalists.

More than a traveler's account, the book rouses reverence for China's natural treasures, which include the world's highest mountain, Qomolangma, named after a goddess by Tibetans who marked it on their map as far back as 300 years ago, but is more popularly known today by its Western-given name, Everest.

Green Camp

In 1996, moved by an appeal from a reader to intervene in a government plan to fell a 100-square-kilometer forest in Yunnan province, Tang organized what became known as Green Camp for College Students. The plan threatened the snub-nosed golden monkey, which thrived uniquely in the area, located near Tibet (and believed to be the inspiration for the myth of Shangri-la).

Tang took a group of students along to observe and gain field experience there. That first camp, which drew 21 participants, created such an impact that the government abandoned its plan.

Every year hence, campers set off for primeval forests and wetlands and conduct research on biodiversity, desertification, water pollution, coastal ecology, protection of endangered animals and other pressing issues. They also help educate local communities.

Over the years, spin-off camps have spread out from Beijing to Shanghai, Nanjing and other cities, organized by the first groups of campers, most of whom have joined China's environmental NGOs.

Green Camp's mission

The mission of Green Camp is to foster concern for the environment and engage the youth in its protection, he told the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF). "I think of it as a kind of school, where the students are educated about nature," he said.

PAYING BACK: Nature is Tang's life saver and now that it's in distress, the writer is teaching the youth how to protect and preserve the environment.

"A Green World Tour" is a grand adventure story, laden with anecdotes about exciting encounters with rarely seen animals and vivid images of panoramas from the beginning of time. The book, published in Chinese (1993) and in English (1999), has been well-received, reprinted many times over.

Being a former journalist, Tang investigates every topic that piques his interest in order to gather first-hand information and, wherever possible, gain personal experience.

He regales the reader with wonderful sights, such as in the panda's natural habitat, in Sichuan's Wolong Nature Reserve.

He fascinates with little known facts, such as those about golden monkeys, a species native to Guizhou province: "Fossils … have been discovered in … a county not far from Mount Fanjing [a famous Buddhist shrine more than 200 years ago], indicating that the monkeys were living there as early as the fourth century. Only 300 to 500 of these monkeys remain on earth.

The book also takes the Chinese to task for "denuding forests, reclaiming farmlands from prairies … and hunting giant pandas, tigers, and wild elephants," while imparting lessons learned from visits to national parks across Asia, North America and Europe.

Understanding interrelationships

In France, for example, Tang learned the importance of understanding interrelationships in managing livelihoods while protecting nature. "Some destruction of nature was caused by people intending to protect nature but who did not understand what they were doing," he wrote.

It took three years to write the book, a collaboration between Tang, whose English had become poor from disuse, and Marcia, whose Chinese was far better than his English.

Ever since they met in 1981 during an excursion in Xishuangbanna—he to see wild elephants and she, to watch birds—the couple had been traveling together and sharing their love for nature and philosophies on life.

Living treasures

With Marcia's help, Tang was able to publish his first book, "Living Treasures," in New York, in 1986. It was also to her that he first broached the Green Camp concept and got the support to get it started, even though she had been stricken with cancer by then.

Marcia died the day the first campers set off for the endangered forest in Yunnan, as though passing on the torch to the next generation. But she had recorded a send-off message, which was played at the camp's opening ceremony.

The message is published in full in a chapter of "A Green World Tour," titled "Marcia Travels with Us," which details her illness and how she courageously coped with it and graciously faced her death.

Tang has been told that readers shed tears over this chapter. That is why, he wrote in its Preface, the book "walked through a life full of ups and downs. I 'walked' this book, not with my legs, but with my heart, my emotions, and my life."

'Apes That Wear Pants'

Echoing Marcia's farewell message, Tang wrote a commentary inspired by a Japanese economist's book, "Apes that Wear Pants." The title referred to man, Tang explained, and 'pants' have given him all kinds of qualities: mysterious and dissolute, honest and hypocritical, religious and evil, civilized and absurd, protective and destructive, peaceful and bellicose. My experience … and my 'green' philosophy make me think sometimes that man would fare better without 'pants.'"

Now 77, Tang remains active. Two years ago, he delivered 130 lectures in 17 cities. He has just published another book, "Green Camp" (2007), three years after the widely publicized "Wrong, Wrong, Wrong," a compilation of views of more than 180 environmentalists and his own thoughts on man's faulty attitudes toward nature and why it is important to stop making the same mistakes.

Immigration holds 3 women for 'links' to Afghan's Taliban

From page A1

They were told by immigration officers that they could not leave the Philippines because they were suspected of having links with Afghanistan's Taliban and that their names were among 503 on an immigration watch list. It was not clear whether those listed are based here or abroad.

The three women arrived in Manila on varying dates in July on the invitation of the militant party-list group Gabriela to attend the 10th biannual Women's International Solidarity Affair, which included discussions on such issues as sex trafficking and other global human rights violations.

It was Enrile's second attempt to leave on Tuesday, and the three women were aware that trouble could be afoot in their return trip to the United States.

On Aug. 5, Enrile—who, like Mirkinson, is an American citizen—was stopped at the Naia from boarding her return flight to Los Angeles and told that she was required to secure clearances from agencies constituting the Philippine government's antiterror council.

"We think that even if they're allowed to leave today (Tuesday), it will not be the end of the issue because the important issue here is why they were placed on the watch list," Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza told the INQUIRER shortly before accompanying the three women into the Centennial Terminal.

"This is not only a policy question but a legal question as well. They (the government) can't do this without any explanation, and Gabriela will pursue this case and hold the government accountable," Maza said.

Red flag

Early evening on Tuesday, the novelist lugged her woven backpack, the professor dragged a trolley suitcase that matched her shoulder bag of colorful prints, and the human rights worker pushed a cart containing her luggage through the maze of queues at the airport's departure area.

It was smooth sailing until they got to the immigration counter at past 8 p.m., where they were red-flagged and told of their supposed links to the Islamic fundamentalist group.

"This is ridiculous. You know that is not true," Rosca, a permanent resident of the United States, told the immigration officers.

Shortly before 9 p.m., an immigration officer found a copy of a "lift order" and the three women were cleared for departure.

"TALIBAN" WOMEN FIGHT ON: With Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza (2nd from left) are International Gabriela Network members Judith Mirkinson, award-winning novelist Ninotchka Rosca and Dr. Analisa Enrile shortly before boarding their flight to the United States on Tuesday night. JESS YUSON

They were allowed to proceed to their respective Philippine Airlines flights—to Los Angeles for Enrile, who said she had wasted around $2,000 on one-way plane tickets that she failed to use and rebook, and to San Francisco for Rosca and Mirkinson.

The lift order, which supposedly removed the 500 other persons from the watch list, was actually issued past 3 p.m. Tuesday. (Immigration officers allowed only a brief look at the document's first page and refused a request for it to be photocopied, saying it was confidential.)

'Victims' of antiterror law

At a press conference on Saturday, where Enrile spoke about her experience, Maza said Rosca, Enrile and Mirkinson were "among the first batch of victims" of the Human Security Act, or the antiterror law.

Indeed, the three women had anticipated the worst, and had complained about it: They sent a letter to the Bureau of Immigration questioning their inclusion in the watch list, and Enrile wrote the US Embassy to seek help in having her name taken off it.

Enrile, national chair of GAB-Net and an assistant clinical professor at the University of Southern California's School of Social Work, said she was later informed that the problem had been addressed.

Mirkinson told the INQUIRER that she was "furious" to learn about her name being on the watch list.

"And also, there were no charges against us. We were never told why we were put on this list. The only thing we can think of is they don't want us to investigate what's going on here," she said, adding:

"I think it tells us, 'You should be very afraid, you shouldn't speak out about what's going on around the world.' And that's exactly the opposite of what we want to do as women activists. We are going to speak out. We are going to investigate what's happening to women. And we will protest.

"Certainly, we're going to pursue why we were on this list. But the list isn't nearly as important to us as what's going on in the Philippines. We're much more interested in the … Filipino activists who have been killed, the people who have disappeared, the conditions that women are living under."

'What's their problem?'

Shortly before she entered the Centennial Terminal, Rosca said she had not experienced anything like this in her previous visits to her motherland.

"Why will they put me [on the list]? What's their problem? They should tell me straight. Every two years I am here; I never have problems. I [travel] all over the world; no problem. Why now, in my own country? Isn't that such a pain?" she said.

Rosca surmised that she had earned a place in the list for her active participation in an international mission to look into the killings and disappearances of Filipino women.

"It's infuriating because other countries take pride in their writers and their novelists," she said.

"In this country, if you're a writer, you get stepped on, you get killed, you disappear… Really, the first ones attacked are the writers, the journalists, because they (the government) want to keep things hidden and they want to keep people silent, obedient."

It's one for pulp fiction: Tarantino on 'padyak'

From page A1

long time but it was not bad at all," said Tarantino, brushing his hair in place with a hand as he arrived at the Malacañang Rizal Hall after his pedicab ride.

Director Tikoy Aguiluz said he and Tarantino were stuck in traffic for more than three hours from Mandaluyong, leaving them with no choice but to take a pedicab near SM Centerpoint in Sta. Mesa to Nagtahan due to the flooded Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard.

Tarantino, director of the Cannes Film Festival winning film "Pulp Fiction" and cult classics like "Kill Bill Volume 1 and 2" and "Reservoir Dogs," was in Malacañang to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Cinemanila Film Festival, along with Robert Malengreau.

Asked if the ride in the pedicab pedaled by a driver scared him, Tarantino made light of his experience, saying: "No! … That's just the way it is."

When Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde greeted him and asked if he indeed rode a pedicab, Tarantino said: "We were stuck in traffic and we took the bike."

Drenched pants

The floods also victimized his host, President Macapagal-Arroyo, who herself got stalled in traffic snarls on her way to her appointments. *(Story on Page A1.)*

The pedicab ride drenched Tarantino's pants and he had to change into black jogging pants with white trimming for the meeting with Ms Arroyo. He also shed off his sandals—not allowed, under the Malacañang dress code—for a pair of ill-fitting shoes that apparently gave him discomfort as he walked.

Over the jogging pants, he wore a *barong*.

Late for the awards

As the 2 p.m. awarding ceremony time went past without Tarantino and the other awardees, Presidential Adviser for Culture Cecil Alvarez told reporters the Hollywood director and Filipino director Tikoy Aguiluz had been stranded in the flood and had to take a pedicab just to make it to Malacañang.

Film producer Arleen Cuevas found Tarantino and Aguiluz standing near the first sentry gate in Nagtahan, where the pedicab had dropped them off, and gave them a lift to the Palace.

During the awarding rites attended by Ms Arroyo, Alvarez recounted how the awardees and participants had braved the floods and the traffic jams to get to the Palace.

Ms Arroyo smiled.

Story for Hollywood

"A funny thing happened on our way here. From limousine to pedicab," Aguiluz said in his remarks.

"I asked him (Tarantino) to take the pedicab and it was OK with him. It's another Filipino story he will tell in Hollywood," Aguiluz said.

Aguiluz said the two of them could not fit into one pedicab so he allowed Tarantino to take one pedicab by himself.

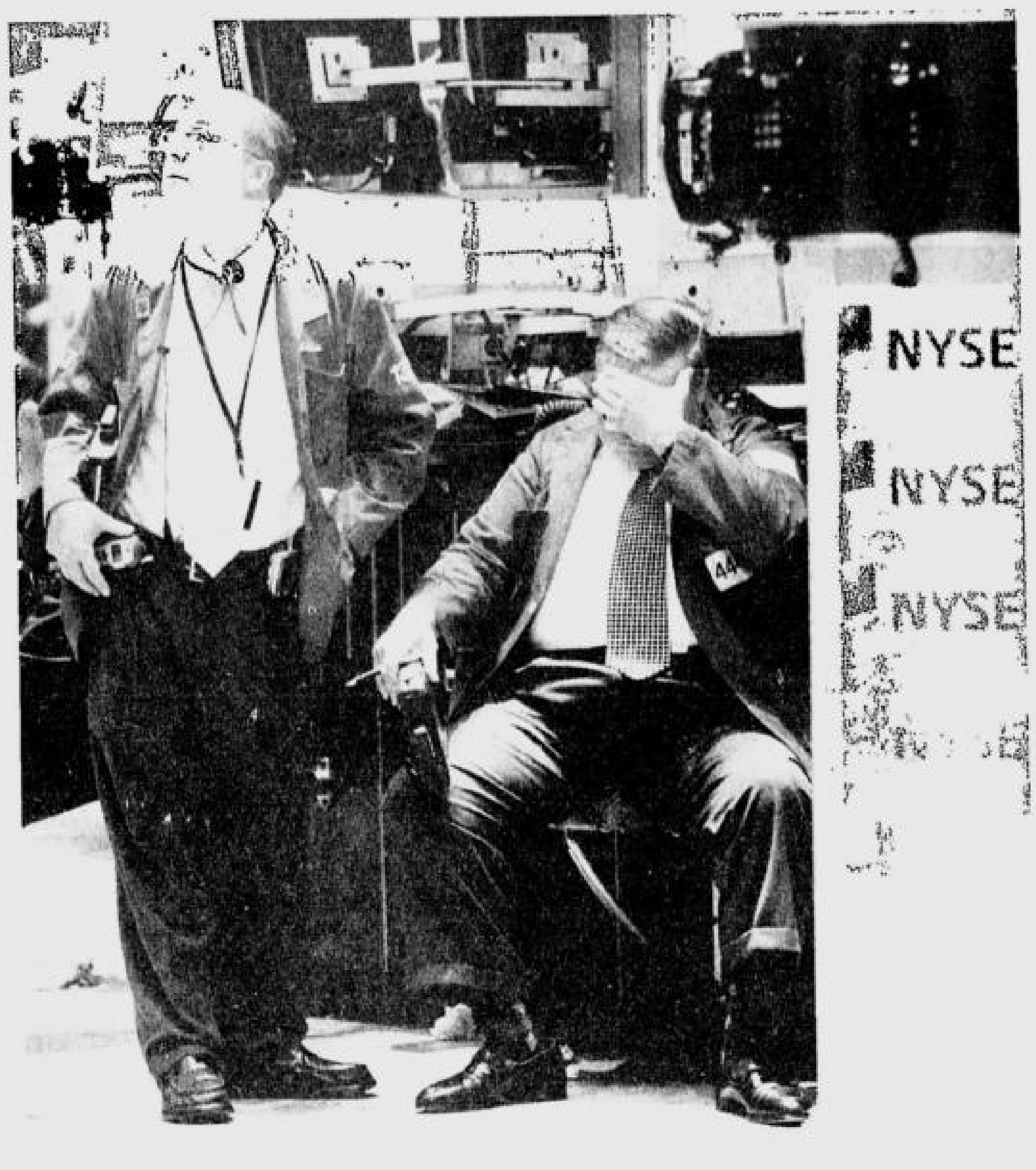
A gracious awardee

A gracious Tarantino made no mention of his ride in his speech.

Instead he talked about the first Filipino film he watched when he was only 7 years old and how Filipino-made action and horror movies were making money in the United States in the 1970s.

RIGHT AS RAIN: At the height of the downpour, Quentin Tarantino (left, back) receives a Lifetime Achievement Award from Cinemalaya film fest in the presence of President Arroyo at the Palace. (Front row) National Artist Eddie Romero, Ms Arroyo and Tikoy Aguiluz. At right back is Robert Malengreau, also an awardee. LYN RILLON

Tiffany Richards, a friend of Tarantino who accompanied him and Aguiluz on the ride, joked that "it was pretty traumatizing for me but he had fun." *With a report from AFP*



THE MOOD IS ANXIOUS for traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Tuesday. Wall Street pulled back sharply over the pace of consumer spending amid a disappointing outlook from Wal-Mart Stores Inc. AP

Asian, Euro stocks tumble over credit crunch in US

From page A1

greenback, down from 45.83 on Tuesday. *(See related story in Business, Page B1.)*

The Tokyo and New Zealand benchmarks tumbled to their lowest closes in nine months. In morning trade in Europe, the Britain's FTSE 100 index fell 1.0 percent, France's CAC 40 benchmark fell 1.4 percent, and Germany's DAX fell 0.7 percent.

Traders remained highly sensitive to evidence that the faltering US subprime sector—which supplies home loans to people with poor credit histories—may have impacted on banks or investment funds around the world.

"Investors are still having a real battle trying to understand who's got the (subprime) exposure and what their liabilities are," Barclays Capital analyst Henk Potts said.

"Until we get a better picture on how the problems we've been seeing in the credits markets will affect long-term business, there's going to be this uncertainty."

The latest wave of selling came despite recent efforts by the world's major central banks to restore calm to global markets by pumping billions of dollars of emergency funds into the banking system.

Short-term gyrations

Some economists and dealers, however, said the gyrations on Asian stock markets were short-term. Some issues could even be good bargains, they said, given the strong growth and earnings data from China, Japan and other regional economies.

The Nikkei 225 stock index, the benchmark for Asia's biggest stock market, plummeted 369.00 points, or 2.19 percent, to 16,475.61, its lowest since last Dec. 8, as financial issues got hammered by the nervousness about a fallout from the US subprime mortgage crisis.

Japanese export issues also took a battering from the strong yen. Worries have been growing about a slowdown in the US economy, fueled by faltering profit forecasts by major retailers.

Weak American spending would be a blow to the Japanese and other Asian economies, which are all still heavily dependent on exports to the United States.

In New Zealand, the benchmark NZX-50 index slipped below the psychological 4,000 barrier before ending down 1.5 percent at 4,004.46—its lowest closing since December 2006.

"It's not a particularly pretty day for the market. World markets are all just following each other at the moment and they're quite skittish," said UBS equities director Paul Nicolson in New Zealand.

Late afternoon, Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index was down 2.9 percent and Singapore's Straits Times Index was down 3.5 percent. Taiwan's Weighted Price Index fell 3.6 percent.

"We remain confident that things can calm down," said David Cohen, director of Asian forecasting at Action Economics in Singapore. "There is enough momentum in the global economy it should ultimately sustain the solid growth in world GDP through the middle of the year."

More bad news

In the short term, though, Cohen warned more bad news could be expected about troubled hedge funds, which could set off another drop in regional stocks.

"It's going to be on a roller coaster for a little while. Clearly, investors are nervous," he said.

Traders in Tokyo said bargain-hunting there may keep Japanese stocks from plunging too much. Some analysts also say market sentiment in Tokyo remains upbeat as worries about subprime mortgages in the US may make it less likely the Bank of Japan will raise interest rates later in the month.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Japan's economy remained on a growth track. Earlier this week, the government reported that the world's second largest economy marked its 10th straight quarter of expansion April-June, although the pace of growth had moderated.

"The Japanese economy remains strong," Abe told reporters. "We do need to keep a close watch."

Lower profit forecasts

But fears remain about the future of the overall US economy. Tuesday, US retailers announced lower profit forecasts, including Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Home Depot Inc.

A slowdown in the US economy, a key export market for Asia, could spell a more real danger for the region.

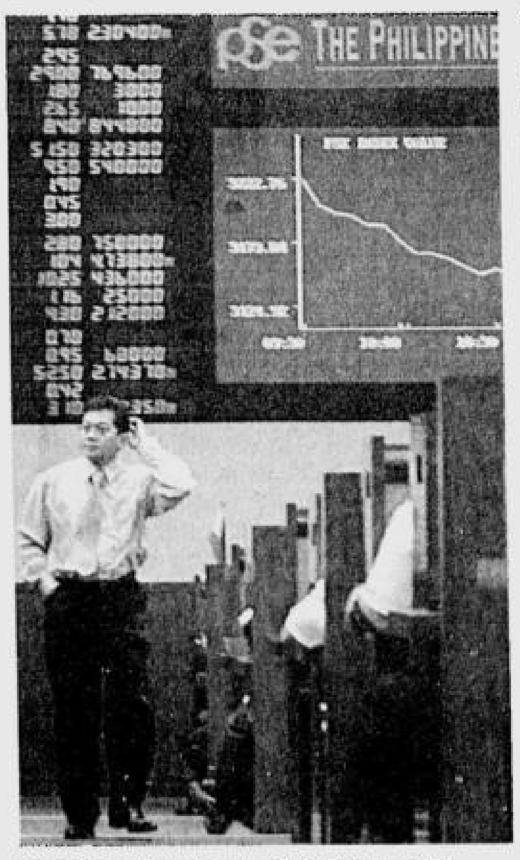
Experts say that the biggest fear is that US mortgage defaults by subprime homeowners will spark tighter global borrowing conditions, thereby weakening consumer spending, corporate activity and world economic growth.

Overnight in the United States, the Dow shed 1.57 percent to 13,028.92, on the verge of falling below the psychologically important 13,000 mark, which it first crossed in late April.

Elsewhere in Asia on Wednesday, Jakarta's main stock index was down 6.5 percent and Thailand's 2.0 percent. Australia's benchmark S&P/ASX 200 fell 3.0 percent to close at 5,788.0.

In Shanghai, where the index has hit seven record high closes this month amid the global turmoil, the Shanghai Composite Index fell 0.1 percent to 4,869.88.

Stock markets were closed in India and South Korea for national holidays. *Reports from AP and AFP*



JITTERS: A Filipino trader walks past an electronic board inside the stock exchange in Makati as Asian stock markets fall sharply on Wednesday as investors shun risky assets amid growing credit jitters. REUTERS

SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

Recent reports have implicated PERFORMANCE FOREIGN EXCHANGE CORPORATION (PFEC) as engaged in illegal investment activities. In order to clarify issues, PFEC deems it prudent to answer the following:

1. What is PFEC?

PFEC is an information service and trading facility provider to those engaged in spot foreign exchange trading. It was duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 23, 1998 with the primary purpose ". . . to operate as a broker/agent between market participants in transactions involving but not limited to foreign exchange, ...".

2. What is it engaged in?

As an information service and trading facility provider, PFEC keeps its clients updated with the current market trends and activities with its daily commentaries, market newsletters and currency trackers to give clients a look into what the market makers are doing. In addition, PFEC provides a state-of-the-art internet currency trading system where clients can directly trade in the foreign exchange market.

3. What is spot foreign exchange trading?

Spot foreign currency trading involves the buying and selling of one currency for another currency at an agreed rate of exchange for delivery within two (2) business days from transaction date. The major currencies are traded at the prevailing exchange rates involving foreign exchange contracts.

4. How do clients earn?

The foreign exchange market is the largest single open market in the world where traders buy and sell round-the-clock. A foreign exchange trader makes profit by taking advantage of favorable market fluctuations. Payment to the client is made through deposit transfer to client's account in any of depository banks or to any bank with the client's name as the sole beneficiary.

5. What is the nature of deposit made with PFEC?

PFEC operates under the margin or leverage system trading. For clients to be able to trade in the foreign currency market, they must meet certain minimum financial criteria to assure the performance of their contracted commitment. The deposit is a security which the client is required to put up prior to initiating an order to answer for the performance of the trade.

6. Are clients free to withdraw their deposits anytime?.

The clients are free to withdraw their free-margin deposit anytime. Free-margin deposit means the deposit which is not under any contracted commitment or any open market position by the client.

7. Does PFEC guarantee profits?

Because of the very nature of spot foreign exchange trading which is highly sensitive to external market forces and, is, therefore, very unpredictable, it is impossible to guarantee profits or a return on one's investments. Hence, PFEC cannot and does not guarantee to its clients that their transactions will be risk-free. Moreover, clients are provided with the mechanism by which they can manage the risks via stop orders and/or limit their losses to an acceptable percentage of the current equity level. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO GUARANTEE OF RETURNS GIVEN BY PFEC.

8. Are clients made aware of the risks of trading currencies?

Clients are apprised of the nature of spot foreign exchange trading through pertinent risk disclosures and are made to undergo one-on-one sessions with responsible officers of PFEC to make them fully aware of the risks of trading currencies.

9. Is PFEC engaged in any pyramid scheme?

No! PFEC is not engaged in any pyramid scheme because the income is generated out of the foreign exchange trading and not on the number of people recruited. The legitimacy of PFEC's business has been affirmed by no less than the Department of Justice, the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

10. Is PFEC related to PIPC Corp.?

No! PFEC is not in any way connected with PIPC Corp. PFEC and PIPC Corp. are engaged in entirely different businesses and have no business relations with each other. PFEC is a foreign exchange information service and trading facility provider to those engaged in spot foreign exchange trading while PIPC Corp. is an outsourcing business company providing IT support and distribution of information about financial offshore companies. In all investigations conducted, PFEC has submitted official documents to prove that PIPC and PFEC are not connected with each other.

11. Is Michael Liew connected with PFEC?

No! Mr. Liew has ceased involvement in the operations of PFEC since June 2004 and has subsequently divested his entire shareholdings in the company as early as 2005 in favor of the SolidGold Group. At present, Mr. Liew has no connection whatsoever with PFEC.

Again, we thank our clients for their steadfast trust and confidence in PFEC and we look forward to a continued mutually beneficial business relationship.

PFEC
PERFORMANCE FOREIGN EXCHANGE CORPORATION
(a member of the SolidGold Group)

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Shame

HAS ANYONE HEARD OF COWS BEING "INSEMInated by seamen" or plants that are "sewn together"? Bernard Lamb, lecturer at Imperial College, London, has found such errors in papers submitted by his students, and he doesn't think they are funny. He plans to publish these and similar egregious spelling mistakes in Quest, the journal of the Queen's English Society, as part of a shame campaign that he hopes will not only make students strive to improve their spelling but also force education officials to improve the quality of English education.

EDITORIAL

Lamb studied 17 British universities in 1992 and found that teachers were "despairing" of their students' poor grasp of the English language. "Ministers say things are getting better, but they are not," said Lamb, 15 years later.

In the English professor, Antonio Calipjo Go has found a soul mate, whose crusade and experience parallel his own. Since 2001, the academic supervisor of Marian School of Quezon City has been waging a lonely crusade to correct errors in the textbooks being used by pupils in elementary schools. He has written letters to newspapers, sought media interviews and put out newspaper advertisements in a shame campaign aimed not so much at schoolchildren as at education officials and book publishers.

All to no avail. Six years later, Filipino schoolchildren still read such enlightening stuff as: "Many Filipino men and women have brains" or "Galileo invented a magnifying telescope to study the moon." And their vocabulary is enriched by learning that the male organ is called "*titi*" while a pimp is known as "*titatita.*"

And what did Go get for all his pains? At first, the Department of Education went through the motion of having his complaints investigated by a panel of experts, who agreed that there were errors in the textbooks he had mentioned but who maintained that these were not as many or as serious as he made them out to be. (In one book, according to Go, the reviewers hired by the DepEd found 9 conceptual errors, 20 factual errors and 47 language errors, but they still gave it a 90-percent rating for "correctness.") Then some book publishers sued him for libel. Later, DepEd officials and the authors of some textbooks sought to discredit his efforts by saying he had either exaggerated the mistakes or made them up altogether.

More recently, after Go took out full-page ads to expose more errors in more textbooks, some DepEd officials cooked up a conspiracy theory. Go, they intimated, is serving as the point man for somebody who is seeking the education portfolio, and that is why he can afford to throw away hundreds of thousands of pesos to put out those ads.

What his detractors seem to have forgotten is that Go launched his crusade for better textbooks long before Jesli Lapus became secretary of education. And he has yet to be heard blaming Lapus directly for the existence of those error-filled textbooks, since he obviously knows the incumbent secretary had nothing to do with their publication.

Given the suspicion, if not outright hostility, with which DepEd officials regard his efforts to bring the mistakes to their attention, is it any wonder that Go can't be dragged into cooperating with them? Can anyone blame him if he wants to meet with them only in the presence of some neutral parties?

It's a pity and a shame that textbook reform is being sidetracked by these personal issues. Both sides realize the importance and urgency of correcting those textbooks. The sooner they sit down to compare notes, the earlier our young pupils will have books that advance their knowledge instead of books that mislead and miseducate them.

Right security mix

IN A VIDEO POSTED ON A WEBSITE, ADAM YAHIYE GADAHN, an American al-Qaida member, was quoted as accusing India of "killing more than 100,000 Muslims in Kashmir with US blessing" and declaring that all Indian and American diplomatic missions are "legitimate targets."

The government cannot afford to take such threats too lightly. For one, this is the first time al-Qaida has advertised that it has India squarely in its sights. And the video threat comes close on the heels of National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan's revelation last week that an al-Qaida team recently did a recce (reconnaissance mission) in India.

FOREIGN COMMENT

Only a mix of heightened vigilance and increased law-enforcement presence will suffice.

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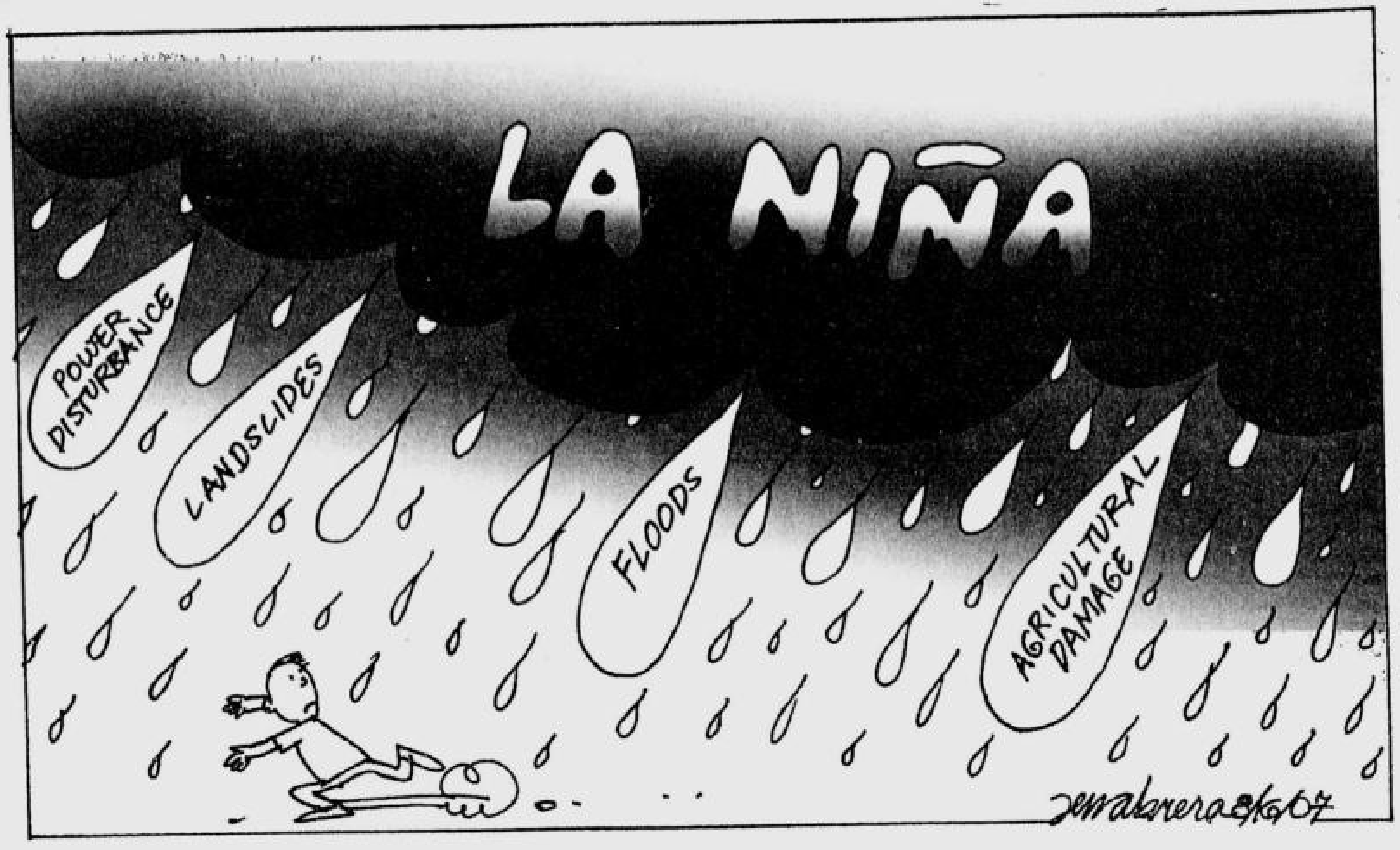

Divergent paths

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"HISTORY MATTERS BECAUSE IT'S THE ONLY laboratory in which we test consequences of decisions." That's one reaction to the new paper "The Philippines and Japan—The Great Divergence," written by University of Maryland's Robert H. Nelson.

We've been rapped as a people of short memories. "[F]ew Filipinos today remember that, economically, the Philippines and Japan contended for the leadership of Asia in the first half of the 20th century," writes Nelson, a visiting professor at the UP School of Economics.

Earlier, this School of Public Policy professor examined, in a Philippine Review of Economics article, why the Philippines, poised to lead economic advance in the mid-1950s, slid to tail-ender rank today.

Despite striking similarities between the Philippines and Japan, the paths of both countries sharply diverged in the last half-century, Nelson notes. Wedged geographically in Asia, the Philippines is culturally, politically and economically Latin American—in its achievements and underperformance.

Japan and the Philippines are island nations, hobbled by limited oil, gas, coal and other natural resources. They're two Asian countries whose main institutions—from constitutions that guaranteed human rights to education—were significantly shaped by American occupation.

Lands of the Spanish friars were confiscated, albeit with compensation, during the US regime. Redistribution of land to smaller farmers fragmented Japan's rural aristocracy. Industrial combines, or "zaibatsu," were hedged by antitrust laws. A broad network of public schools blanketed the Philippines. And reforms scrubbed militaristic tendencies as Japan's schools refocused on a modern curriculum. In both countries, women won their right to vote during the American occupation. US military bases were set up in the two countries. They remain in Japan today. They shut down here in 1992.

In 1902, Philippine income per capita was 15 percent of that of the United States. That same year, Japanese income per capita was 26 percent of US level. Up to 1930, Philippine income per capita rose more rapidly than either the United States' or Japan's. It crested at 22 percent of US level—within spitting distance of Japan's 32 percent then.

"In the labor market, real wages in the Philippines were higher, during the 1920-1924 period than in Japan," Harvard University's Jeffrey Williamson estimates. Total national income of Japan was much larger, reflecting its bigger population and industrial base. Japan funneled much of its income then to the military. "They built battleships," Nelson recalls.

The 1930 depression derailed rapid Philippine economic growth. Could this have resumed? Perhaps. But "policy miscalculations that continue to this present day" intervened, Nelson argues. Other Asian countries encouraged foreign investments. We barreled the other way.

The 1935 Constitution banned foreign land ownership. It capped foreign ownership in corporations to 40 percent. "Thus, in one of the first steps toward nationhood, protecting the existing landowning and business elite from foreign competition was given a higher priority than the future rapid growth of the nation."

(The same elite back-scratching continues up to the present. This surfaces in trial balloons to ensure that former President Joseph Estrada gets "amnesty," if convicted of plunder by the anti-graft court.)

World War II shattered both countries. By 1946, Japan's income per capita was less than half its pre-war level. Income per capita in the Philippines collapsed to only 7 percent of the US level. "The starting points ... were surprisingly similar." Was it reasonable to expect "significant convergence, over time"? It was not impossible for the Philippines to tap into Japan's technological and industrial pool.

"History is not a recipe book," it's been said. "There are few certainties to be found in the past." Each country pursued its separate course—and rapidly diverged. By 1991, prior to the Asian economic crisis, Japanese income per capita approached 85 percent of the United States'. The Philippines slipped to only 9 percent of the US level (where it stagnated till as recently as 2003).

"What happened?" Nelson asks. The basics of this complicated story "are not so difficult to discern."

Japan made economic catchup a virtual religion around which the nation unified. It harnessed a politically independent, highly educated and well-paid bureaucracy to get the job done. "The political consensus is in this fact: a single party essentially remained in power for the entire post-war period."

The Philippines had no unifying vision. The elites spoke of political democracy and social equality. "The reality was otherwise." A few families that arrogated political powers for themselves "became the 'new friars' of Philippine society, exercising wide powers over the archipelago like their Spanish Catholic predecessors for more than 300 years."

In Japan, occupation policies were adapted and often significantly modified. But broader goals of political and economic development were in large part achieved. In the Philippines, once the Americans left, "the Spanish Catholic heritage proved more enduring."

Democratic instability, a long period of dictatorship, and economic decline here have closely resembled events throughout Latin America. These caused much deprivation and human hurt. Will history forgive the "new friars" even as they circle wagons to protect one of their own—like Joseph Estrada?

"History will be kind to me," Winston Churchill once predicted. "I intend to write it."

* * *

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Wanted: Opposition

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

WE HAD AN INTERESTING ITEM IN THE front page last Sunday, which was Kapatiran's lone winner in the last elections keeping the party's hopes alive. That lone winner is John Carlos de los Reyes who was elected councilor in Olongapo City and who now carries on Kapatiran's work there. All of the party's other candidates lost, notably the three who ran for senator—Martin Bautista, Zosimo Paredes and Adrian Sison.

I myself do not see why the flame of Kapatiran's future should be kept flickering solely by that victory. There's much air, or oxygen, to fan it to a roaring fire these days. Not the least of it being the not-very-poor showing of the Kapatiran candidates in the elections despite bucking near-impossible odds. Despite meager funds and even more meager time to kick off an effective campaign, they managed to capture the imagination of media (which featured them more than the others) and of many civic-minded citizens and groups (who volunteered to campaign for them for free). The party can always take heart from that.

But more than that, the fierce wind that should blow Kapatiran into a raging fire over the next few years is simply that there is a need for it. That need comes from the fact that there is no opposition left in this country. You look at the current state of the so-called "opposition" and you will be hard put to see what its members are opposed to. Or, well, it is easy to see what they are opposed to: They are opposed to others being in power, not they.

The first thing they did after elections was to fight for spoils in the form of committee chairmanships, trading their votes for Senate president the way merchants sell their wares to the needful and whores sell their bodies to the lustful. Forgetting that one of their own was even then struggling to put his head above water while a flood of cheating swirled around him, who was of course Koko Pimentel. He drowned from his cries reaching heedless ears.

The second thing they did, or at least three of them did, was to eye the prize in the form of the presidency, like prospectors half-crazed by the sun and time spent in dancing wildly at discovering fool's gold. Who are Manny Villar, Mar Roxas, and Loren Legarda. Do they seriously think the one who wears the crown will give it up so willingly after all the blood that now taints it?

If only by default or the principle that a vacuum will always be filled, Kapatiran should have its future burnished like gold or its flames stoked to a blinding light, whichever image you prefer. This country is looking for a way out of the crippling bind it finds itself now. This country is looking for a way out of the clashing rocks that are threatening to turn the ship of state, or ship of fools, or ship of slaves, into a pile of flotsam and debris—if they haven't done so already. This country is looking for a way out of Erap and GMA, the entertainers and the *trapos*, the administration and the loyal—or opportunistic—opposition the way the down-and-out are looking to other shores as a way out of their desperate straits.

If only because this country needs to survive, Kapatiran has every reason to thrive.

I've always said that if there was a stage where a country could achieve self-sustaining growth, there must also be a stage where a country could reach self-perpetuating backwardness. If by an accretion of the right elements a country could reach a point where it might "take off" and never look back, then by an accretion of the wrong elements, a country could reach a point where it might fall into a pit and never be able to climb back out. You believe in God, you have to believe in the devil.

That's what we're on the brink of today. We're falling downward, in a swirling, spiraling, self-propelling way, and we're gathering speed. All our neighbors, including Cambodia and Laos, are rushing past us, while we whistle in the dark. I was tempted to say like the Seven Dwarves, but the Seven Dwarves at least had jobs. We don't arrest that fall over the next few years, we won't have a country left.

But it's more than our floundering in an angry sea that should make us search desperately for safe harbor that is a Kapatiran, it is also that Kapatiran itself offers a beacon of hope to the storm-tossed. It is the only real political party in this country, which shows exactly what is wrong with our political system. I used to say other than the Communist Party of the Philippines, but even the CPP tends to have leaders that are bigger than the party and not a party that is bigger than its junta. And Kapatiran is the only (non-clandestine) party that will have nothing to do with *trapos*. Of course right now, that makes for good news and bad news: The good news is that Kapatiran has no *trapos*, the bad news is that it has little else. But that can always change—when you realize the joke is on you.

I personally think Kapatiran should strike an alliance with the other groups that contested the 2004 elections—notably Aksyon Demokratiko and Eddie Villanueva's group, the Church, the NGOs and other elements of Edsa I and II—and form a coalition to challenge the ruling parties, or party since they're just really one. Cory did it, and we're back to the days of martial law anyway, fighting another Marcos. And I seriously suggest that Kapatiran add an emotional appeal to its mental one, regaling the world with stories and not just agendas, with passion and not just platform, with dream and vision and not just facts and figures.

If you build it, as "Field of Dreams" says, they will come. That isn't just faith, that is truth.

A pipe dream? Well you think becoming a First World country in 20 years, or the person who says that will step down well before then, isn't?

Time to walk the talk

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AT THE LUNCHEON HOSTED BY SPEAKER JOSE de Venecia for the hugely popular Japanese Ambassador Ryuichiro Yamazaki, talk among some Filipino guests inevitably touched on the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA). The Japanese guests, among them Ministry of Trade officials, diplomatically withheld comment, doubtless because the ball is in RP's court. The Senate still has to ratify the agreement signed in Helsinki last September by President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi (not incumbent PM Shinzo Abe, as I erroneously wrote earlier). JPEPA took four years to negotiate. The problem is, many senators remain in the dark about it till now. By the way, any talk about it being an "executive agreement" and, therefore, not needing Senate ratification is wishful thinking on the part of some frustrated Cabinet members.

* * *

Trade Secretary Peter Favila surmised that one reason for the resistance to JPEPA may be that it's about a foot-thick with 16 chapters and with its text set single-spaced and back to back on all pages. The Senate is not famous for being studious and already some senators are volunteering negative opinions on some of the pact's aspects based on hearsay, or on the opinion of some leftists who don't seem to wish the country prosperity. I suggested to Favila that the Department of Trade and Industry make a primer on JPEPA's salient provisions for the benefit of the senators. He rightly opines that there's the fear of the unknown, but this can only be assuaged by more dialogue with the senators and NGOs. Some concerns are quite valid, but everyone should realize that we need markets such as Japan to sell our goods to.

* * *

Favila also expressed hope that the Senate will pass JPEPA since it is the first bilateral agreement entered into by our country. With the breakdown of the WTO negotiations in Geneva, he said, more and more countries (e.g., Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia) are forging bilateral agreements, following the "spaghetti bowl" approach of mixing multilateral and bilateral agreements in a "one size fits all" scheme. In fact, notes Favila, JPEPA was signed by President Arroyo much earlier than the agreement between Japan and Thailand but the Thais have already completed the ratification process. He recently argued before the Ledac that if RP cannot ratify the treaty, it would be difficult for us to be taken seriously by other countries.

* * *

Ambassador to Tokyo Domingo Siazon has also been seeing senators to drum up support for JPEPA. "We should not miss the boat once again," he stressed while noting that RP, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have been moving as one group, known as Asean 4, vis-à-vis the big players in the region, China and India. The group, he said, constitutes "big industrial production bases for the Japanese," but if RP were to go it alone now, we cannot compete.

Let's hope the senators will act on this bilateral treaty quickly. One problem is that some of them are already beamed toward 2010 and are eager to gain media mileage. But JPEPA has taken four years to negotiate and deliberate, and it's now time to walk the talk. Indeed there are so many things pending in the Senate.

* * *

Cecile Alvarez and I interviewed Assistant Foreign Secretary for Asean Affairs Luis Cruz to talk about the 40th anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) that came to a close in a glittering five-day summit in Manila recently. We were glad we did, for previously we had no idea how mind-boggling the efforts taken were. To the credit of the DFA and the security forces, everything went seamless and secure. Last Aug. 2, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo turned over the chairmanship to the foreign minister of Singapore, which will host the next Asean Leaders Summit in November. But behind all the pomp and splendor was a lot of hard work from the Asean members, most specially the Philippines as the host country.

Few people realized that so many events in the past two weeks were held here, back to back and even overlapping. All told, there were 24 big meetings, of which 14 were ministerial-level and 10 preparatory. Few also know that the spadework for all these events required 106 meetings hosted by RP from August 2006 to August 2007.

* * *

Aside from the Asean 10 Ministerial Meeting, there were the following: the Post Ministerial Conference between Asean and six dialogue partners; the 14th Asean Regional Forum of 27 foreign ministers; the Asean plus 3 (the Northeast Asian ministers); and the East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers meeting, involving 16 foreign ministers (Asean's 10 and six countries which were not involved in the Cebu Summit last January, namely, Canada, Australia, the US, New Zealand, Russia and the European Union). In addition to all these meetings, there were the calls on President Arroyo by all the foreign ministers, as well as separate bilateral talks that countries held here among themselves, e.g., Mongolia and China, RP and the US, all of which had to be arranged by the DFA. More about this later.

* * *

Filipino tenor Jun Peñaverde, 30, who is billed as a "young Pavarotti," will hold his departure recital tomorrow, Aug. 17, at the San Beda parish chapel in Alabang Hills, at 8 p.m. Peñaverde, a very talented classical music artist, obtained a tuition scholarship at New York City's Manhattan School of Music for his master's degree in voice. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in communication arts from the University of Asia and the Pacific, and a bachelor's degree in music from the UST Conservatory. But the scholarship to Manhattan is only for tuition, and he needs a living allowance, which is why his friends and relatives organized tomorrow's concert. Tickets are priced at only P300 each and available at the parish office. Help a promising music artist and enjoy his heavenly voice.

'Getting Home' and going the extra mile

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

AS A GESTURE OF SUPPORT FOR THE FILM INdustry of this world, I told myself I will watch at least one film shown at the 9th Cinemanila International Film Festival (still going on, by the way) which has the presence of no less than US director Quentin Tarantino. The guy's name is splashed on big banners at the Gateway Mall in Araneta Center, the festival's venue.

I watched the Chinese film "Getting Home"—a "gently philosophical road comedy," directed by Zhang Yang—because the synopsis promised something so out of the ordinary. Also because I had watched a couple of really good Chinese ones in the past, among them, the award-winning "Not One Less" (starring rural school children as themselves) and the heart-breaking "Xiu-Xiu, The Sent-Down Girl." These are minimalist films—if I may call them that—and do not belong to the "Crouching Tiger" genre that has elaborate sets, movements and plots.

I was not disappointed. When it was over, I walked out of the theater with a smile on my face and a little tear in my eye. And "Getting Home" was supposed to be a comedy. You know, like "Ang Tatay Kong Nanay" (Dolphy and Niño Muhlach) is comedy but brings on the tears in the end. Because it is about human relationships.

Who'd ever think of making a film about a wandering corpse? Hold your horror, "Getting Home" isn't a horror movie. It is about friendship and loyalty beyond death. Like, "How do I love thee, let me count the ways." Countless indeed are the ways a friend would think of to prove his loyalty to a friend who died far away from home and in not so honorable a manner.

This is also about Good Samaritans on the highways as well as highwaymen with evil intent, about strangers going the extra mile for strangers, the little lives they lead, their joys, their dreams, their pain. It also gives you a glimpse of the changing landscape of semi-rural, semi-urban places in China and the values and traditions that endure and remain.

While watching the film I couldn't help thinking about a Filipino version, perhaps starring Johnny Delgado as the loyal friend. And since Rene Requiestas and Yoyoy Villame are dead, I couldn't think of someone who would be the corpse.

When his drinking buddy and long-time coworker Liu Quanyou (Hong Qiwen) drops dead during a drinking spree, his friend Zhao (Zhao), a 50-ish migrant worker, vows to bring home his friend's corpse to his family so he could be given a proper burial. Zhao plans to transport Liu's corpse through the countryside via the local bus route. He carries his dead friend on his back and seats him on a passenger bus. The bus is waylaid by a gang of holdup men but Zhao is able to talk the bad guys into giving up their evil deed. They give Zhao the loot and leave, something the passengers should be grateful for. But not when Zhao reveals that Liu is a corpse. He assures the irate women Liu is dead when they accuse Liu of watching them while they were urinating on the wayside.

Ingrates. In the middle of nowhere Zhao has to get off the bus with his dead friend on his back. His journey continues on the winding road that seems endless. A truck driver stops and picks them up. Zhao sings a love song to entertain the driver. Painful memories of a lost love come crashing down and the driver suffers an impromptu emotional breakdown. It is a cathartic moment and Zhao must take charge in order to prevent the truck from careening into the abyss.

Zhao gets off with his dead friend at the fork of the road. From hereon he will have to use unconventional methods of transporting the body—by putting the corpse inside a huge tire and rolling it down a hill, by hiding it inside a huge concrete pipe that gets loaded on a cargo truck. Several times Zhao wants to call it quits and join his friend in the afterlife. He is tired, he is hungry and his shoes are worn out. When he takes off the corpse's shoes he finds a wad of bills hidden inside. A good meal at last! Alas, the money turns out to be fake and Zhao almost gets lynched at the roadside restaurant.

But the people he meets on the long road to home give Zhao reason not to give up. Like the rich, eccentric recluse who stages his own funeral complete with paid mourners and all, Zhao among them. Zhao turns out to be the most convincing mourner. When the "dead" man later "rises" from the dead, he seeks out the stunned Zhao who promptly admits it was his hunger and the free meal that made him join the funeral rites. The rich man tells him, "Indeed, hunger can make a man honest" or something like that. He also teaches Zhao some secrets on cadaver preservation and how to make Liu's corpse last a little longer.

There still are several remarkable characters down the road—a young family of beekeepers that has opted for a simple life on the farm, a cyclist on his way to Tibet who shows Zhao the beauty around him and on the horizon beyond.

It is a kind police officer that finally picks up the near-dead Zhao (because of exhaustion) and the corpse. Liu's corpse is cremated and the officer helps Zhao (who is not carrying Liu's ashes) find his way to the Three Gorges where Liu's family is supposed to be. There they find ruins of homes that have been demolished. And where Liu's home used to be, they find a broken door with a message for Liu from his family that has relocated. The village will soon go under water. (When finished, the Three Gorges dam will be the biggest dam in the world.)

This is not the end of Zhao's journey.

How often do you go out of your way and walk a mile for a friend and, more importantly, for a stranger? To help, or for no other reason except to make a stranger happy?

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Asean's charter and human rights commission

COMMENTARY

Lauro L. Baja Jr.

IF PRESS REPORTS AND STATEMENTS OF OFFIcials are accurate, the success of the 40th Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and of the Cebu summit and the coming one in Singapore will be measured largely by the signing of the Asean Charter and the creation of the region's human rights body.

These are valid advocacies that, in many significant ways, will define the future of Asean. The negotiations regarding these matters should therefore be handled properly.

It would be instructive and interesting to know what was agreed upon by the Asean foreign ministers concerning the human rights body. The Philippines' foreign secretary said there was a consensus to include in the Asean Charter a provision mandating the creation of a human rights body. In the same breath, he said that the foreign ministers agreed in "principle" to the creation of a human rights body. The foreign minister of Singapore was quoted as saying that Burma (Myanmar) had a "positive attitude" toward the proposal.

What was really agreed on is crucial since this will determine the "when, the what, and the how" of the human rights body. In diplomacy, an "agreement in principle" takes a very long time to germinate. Translated into everyday "diplomatese," it means nothing more than an agreement to postpone making a decision.

It is also difficult to even imagine how a body could be "functional and operational the moment the draft charter is signed, as planned, in the next leaders' summit in Singapore this November." This is especially so because the CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam) countries are reportedly not really ready for the idea. The premise for an Asean human rights body is the protection and promotion of these rights; "international credibility for the association" should only be an auxiliary benefit.

Non-government organizations from Asean have long been pushing for a regional commission on human rights. The Philippine group is headed by Wigberto Tañada and Carlos Medina. The experience and expertise of these groups could be a rich source of lessons for the establishment of this machinery. If negotiations on this proposed Asean Charter provision become too protracted, member-states may opt for a separate instrument to establish the body instead of negotiating it into nothingness.

Asean members are neighbors, but an Asean community is still further down the road. As Natalia Morales, vice president of the Philippine Council for Foreign Relations, observed: "Asean is definitely understood and appreciated by political leaders and the economic elite who have the means to benefit from the regional process." As a cornerstone of Philippine foreign policy, Asean benefits must "trickle down" now, rather than later, to the common man. As things stand, member-states are hobbled by their existing bilateral security and military arrangements, by traditional ties brought about by colonialism, and by the penchant of the individual Asean members for separate bilateral pacts (e.g. FTAs). As things stand, the Asean can advance only at a pace that the slowest member would allow.

The Philippines' leadership role in Asean has not been properly and sufficiently projected. The 12th Asean summit is unfairly remembered for its postponement because of a typhoon which did not materialize as feared; and the 40th AMM for important decisions not arrived at and left to the Singapore summit to make, and for the country's chairmanship of the Asean. This gives credence to the observation of a veteran diplomat that Singapore's foreign policy implementation is more aggressive and strategic than ours and that Singapore is elated to finish what the Philippines was not able to do.

President Macapagal-Arroyo urged the Asean to push for "one single united front to set the course for our region." After 40 years and 12 summits, and being touted as one of the most successful regional groups in the developing world, the Asean must realize that the world outside Southeast Asia is changing rapidly; and that it will not wait for an association mired in the agonizing process of self-discovery and reform.

Much hope and expectation have been placed on an Asean Charter. As such, the Charter must be more than a "codification" of existing norms, values and traditions; and much more than a restatement of what are already existing principles embodied in universal covenants. It should provide for institutions to monitor members' compliance with the rules established. Otherwise, Asean stands to be a mini-United Nations—a convenient tool box, thought of only in times of crisis.

The Charter must embark on a vision for Asean's progressive development—to enable Asean not only to earn respect and recognition but, more importantly, to influence events and developments in the world, and perhaps to become a global player.

In addressing the issues of the Asean Charter and a human rights body, member-states must not lose sight of the more immediate concerns of the Asean peoples—specific and concrete measures to address the need to put food on their tables; to provide light and clean water in their homes, and safety from natural and man-made calamities. The Asean will be as strong and relevant only to the extent that its foundation—the Asean peoples—is made so. Otherwise, the association will be viewed only as a cork of a bottle: while it may serve a purpose, it will lack intrinsic value to its people on the ground, and relevance to the peoples of the world.

At 40, and as it approaches its crossroads, the Asean should already be informed, decisive and competitive.

Lauro L. Baja Jr. is a former senior undersecretary of foreign affairs and immediate past permanent representative of the Philippines to the United Nations

Rudeness

YOUNG BLOOD

Abigail B. Villacorte

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WE ARE LIVING IN AN AGE WHEN EVERYTHING COMES easy. Everything, from food to research paper to gadgets, can be had or done with a simple push of a button or a mere click of a mouse. But I have been looking for a special gadget without success. It's a tool that will give people good manners.

Recently my supervisor told me what happened when she went to Sunday Mass. I prepared myself to hear about the priest's homily, but I was shocked when she narrated instead how their parish priest had humiliated a man by refusing to give him communion. She quoted the priest as telling the poor man, "People in shorts are not allowed to go to Mass." Red faced, the man left the church.

Aren't priests supposed to show compassion? If this priest turned away a man in shorts, what would he do to those who go to church in rags? Jesus saw beyond the sick man's leprosy, didn't He? He saw beyond the clothes and the bad reputation. Mary Magdalene, according to the Bible, was a prostitute, but Jesus saw beyond that. He saw her heart. That priest is nowhere near to being Jesus' disciple. He is nothing but a hypocrite. Drunk with conceit about being a priest, a chosen one, he committed the sin of pride inside the house of God.

A few days after I heard that story, I witnessed a teacher go berserk for no good reason at all. Profanities flowed out of her mouth like water. She said single mothers are whores. It doesn't matter how a single woman came to have a child. Even if she had been widowed or she had been raped, once she delivers a child, she is a whore.

This so-called teacher also insulted her own brother who has yet to finish college. For her, a person's educational attainment defines his worth. And because she is a teacher, with a bachelor's degree under her belt, she believes she is way much higher than her brother.

Aren't teachers supposed to be role models, someone you can look up to? This woman clearly is not. What kind of example does she show to her students? It seemed as if it never occurred to her that some of her students are being raised by single parents. I would not send my child to the school where this woman works even if it were the last school on earth.

With this kind of people walking among us, is it surprising that more people are becoming more ill-mannered as the days roll by? Parents send their children to schools whose teachers they don't know. They may not be aware of it, but someone in the faculty may be rotten. Thus, we sometimes hear of schoolchildren being maltreated by their teachers. Imagine the trauma such kids go through. Parents entrust their kids to teachers to learn, but instead the children get scars that they will bear for the rest of their lives.

People go to church to commune with God. But with priests who treat God's people with condescension, it is not surprising that fewer people turn up in church on Sundays. Like me, perhaps, the others have found it better to talk to God at home.

Early in my life, I was taught by my parents to appreciate and acknowledge every kind gesture, no matter how small. When I was still in school, all the security guards and every worker in school knew me because I made it a point to greet them every day.

I always smile at people, knowing that a smile can help light up everyone's day. I read somewhere that it takes fewer muscles to smile than to frown. So how come more people choose to frown? And how hard is it to say thank you?

It is sad to see how good manners seem to have gone out of fashion. How did this come to be? Did we get deaf listening to our iPods? Are we too busy texting or surfing Friendster sites to care?

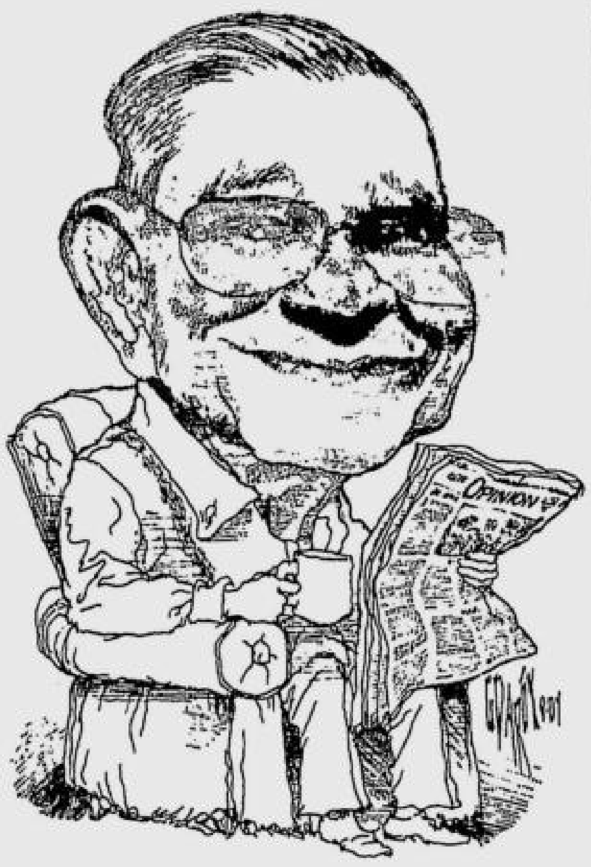
It is sad that most people seem to have lost their manners. Because of this, I pity the children that I will have. Most people no longer care about others. It is every man for himself. I pity the rude teacher I met for she seems to have a big problem. I would rather not have a diploma than be a teacher with the manners of villains who I thought only existed in books and movies. I pity the priest who seems to have the wrong notion about how to bring people closer to God. I pity myself because in our society today, not too many people seem to be aware that we have taken a turn for the worse.

Abigail B. Villacorte, 27, works as an information writer at the Manila International Airport Authority.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

IN THE NEWS



Jovito R. Salonga

Lethargic concern for education

SOMEHOW IT SIMPLY GOES against common sense to believe that the transfer of Neda Director General Romulo Neri to the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) has anything to do with addressing the gaps in our tertiary education.

Why would Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo choose to appoint an economist to head the office mandated to promote quality higher education for all? Aren't there so many education advocates out there who can effectively take over the job?

And why would she think that Neri will be able to troubleshoot the problems in tertiary education in just six months? What reforms can he possibly implement in so short a time? Why break the momentum now when reform programs in higher education are in place?

Not a few believe that Neri's "demotion" is "punishment" for his position on the National Broadband Network (NBN) issue. Is GMA then treating an education institution as a temporary "penitentiary" to keep her allies in check?

Or let's say GMA planned this arrangement very carefully—she wants an economist to steer higher education in line with her economic agenda; re-engineer tertiary education and match it with jobs available in the foreign labor market (e.g., nursing and teaching professions)—which would further deplete our country's pool of nurses and teachers; orient our higher education toward filling in the needs of our burgeoning industries today—which means we will be training more of our workforce to be call center agents, medical transcribers, food and beverage attendants and mining workers.

Meanwhile, our agriculture, forestry, fisheries and health sectors—the very sectors essential to our country's genuine productivity and sustainability—will suffer. Neri, thus, will be implementing not CHEd's mandate, but merely GMA's unsound economic policies in the realm of higher education.

Still another possible motive that some critics suspect is behind Neri's transfer: the reported not-so-good relation among the three education chiefs at the Department of Education, CHEd and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority—particularly between replaced CHEd Chair Carlito Puno and Tesda chief Augusto Syjuco. GMA reportedly wants to improve the coordination between the two agencies. If this is so, why make way for the one saddled with allegations of corruption? At least Puno had the backing of state colleges and universities which expressed their dismay over his removal from CHEd.

The general conclusion we can deduce from all these is that Neri's transfer was an imprudent decision meant only to serve GMA's interests.

All that GMA has done points out the fact that this administration does not take education seriously.

—ANNIE ENRIQUEZ-GERON,
general secretary,
Public Services Labor
Independent Confederation
(PSLINK), 15 Clarion Lily St.,
Saint Dominic Subdivision I,
Congressional Avenue,
Project 6, Quezon City

'Fallacious' objection to Atienza's appointment

HAVING MAJORED IN PHILOSOPHY, English and Political Science, I cannot help but comment on the opposition to the appointment of former Manila Mayor Lito Atienza as environment secretary.

The criticisms are all "argumentum ad hominem." In logic and in argumentation and debate, this is fallacious thinking, and therefore, illogical.

To head, manage and administer the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, or any government office for that matter, requires managerial skills and talent, more than avidness to the function, character or image with which an office is identified.

Lawyer Vladimer Cabigao, Odette Alcantara and their ilk might have been merely carried away by their individual prejudices against Atienza. They haven't taken into account his qualifications, not even the fact that running the City of Manila could be a measure of one's ability to run the country itself. Besides, a Cabinet secretary position is a political position.

—HUMBERTO BASCO,
Suite 409 CCI Bldg.,
Natividad Almeda Lopez cor.
San Marcelino Sts. Ermita, Manila

Pampanga's vice gov dazed too early by ambition

PAMPANGA'S VICE GOVERNOR must realize that calling people names, especially if they are of "unquestionable" integrity, is like burying one's self in quicksand. ("Panlilio-vice gov word war heats up," INQUIRER, 8/12/07)

Gov. Eddie Panlilio withstood the barrage of criticism hurled against him during the election. A comparatively little-known vice governor, attacking a crusader in shining armor is indeed inviting self-destruction. It would take another Pinatubo eruption to drown out the popularity and optimism that go with the incumbency of a truly altruistic governor.

The vice governor should know the limits of his ambition; it is too early to confront a giant. He ought to fire his PR people for a major blunder.

—JACK ALINGASA,
Apt. 3, Neri Compound,
Corrales Avenue,
Cagayan de Oro City

Work on poll automation now

BEFORE THE COUNTRY IS EMBROILED in another electoral exercise, it is fitting that we draw attention to the mandate of the last Congress for the computerization of elections in the entire country. Republic Act 9369 is clear and unequivocal. The nation must implement the computerized elections law for the survival and stability of our democracy.

As we all know, the recent May 2007 elections could not be automated because the Commission on Elections, through its chair, declared that, despite the passage of the law five months before the balloting, there was no more time to effectively implement it.

It is now August 2007. We are just a little over two months away from the barangay elections in October. We will hold the ARMM elections next year. And before you know it—in just two years and 10 months—the country will be holding presidential elections in 2010. The time to ask whether automation is already in place is not when we are about to vote, but way before the balloting, so we will not be presented with excuses again.

So far as we in the Senate can see, there are no more legal impediments to implementing the automation law. The way is clear. The ball is fully in the hands of our elections body.

I am concerned by reports that the barangay elections scheduled in October this year will be undertaken without automation. If that happens, the same questions and difficulties that marked the May election will again haunt the nation.

The country needs assurance that the Comelec is fully attending to this daunting task, that when the time comes for the nation to vote again, it will be able to do its work to the satisfaction of all.

—SEN. RICHARD J. GORDON

Reds just getting dose of own medicine

COMMUNIST FRONT ORGANIZATIONS (e.g., Bayan, Gabriela, Anakpawis) are protesting against the antiterrorism law as well as the killing of their militant members. They claim that the human rights of their slain members have been violated. They portray the "victims" as innocent and helpless.

The fact is, they are not that innocent or helpless. They have a 7,000-strong private army, the New People's Army, which operates outside the law. When militants infiltrate a barangay to preach rebellion, recruit members and supporters, and agitate the residents, the barangay officials opposing their activities are immediately liquidated by the NPA.

The NPA has been declared by almost the entire world as a terrorist organization. Surely, the militants, although identified with "above-ground" organizations, are secret NPA members. They share the same objectives, that is, to take over the country. When militants join front organizations, they are fully aware that they become part of a terrorist organization that sanctions the killing of people and the violation of civil rights. Why would the government bother about the militants' human rights?

When arrested for doing something illegal, militants say that it is for the courts to decide on their innocence or guilt. But we all know that our prosecutors and judges are totally terrified to prosecute militants.

"Human rights violations" became a common phrase in the United States mainly due to the abuses committed by the police against blacks. However, invoking human rights for members of a terrorist organization which has 7,000 armed defenders is an entirely different matter.

While the communist militants denounce the violation of their rights, they want to put up a dictatorship that will not respect human rights. If you denounce human rights abuses in communist countries, you are likely to land in jail, or worse, get a bullet in the back of your head. So it is pure hypocrisy that militants denounce human rights violations.

The militants are really anti-Filipino. They make no bones about engaging in activities that will keep the people poor. They drive away investors from the countryside with their extortion activities. They agitate against industries like mining which can employ hundreds of thousands of our people.

After Edsa I, they engaged in wildcat strikes which forced many factories to close shop, thus causing the layoff of hundreds of thousands of workers and frightening foreign investors.

The communists want our people to be mired in poverty since it is the only way they can take over our country. No rich country has ever turned communist.

The overwhelming majority of our people do not want our country to fall into the hands of communists who, once in power, will probably slaughter millions of Filipinos, as what happened when communists took over Cambodia.

The military is just giving the militants a dose of their own medicine.

—DANILO ALVERO,
5/F Century Plaza Bldg.,
Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

Feeling sorry for Boholanos

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS REPORT: "Boom Boom's village also loses." (INQUIRER, 8/13/07)

I feel sorry for the Boholanos because of this comment from their governor, Erico Aumentado: "If Boom Boom becomes a champion, I will fulfill my commitment that I will have the road passing through his barangay in Can-uling cemented. Right now, it's a no-go."

Next time, vote wisely.

—ALFRED LIM,
ailmd@hotmail.com

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Vengeance fuels offensive vs Sayyaf

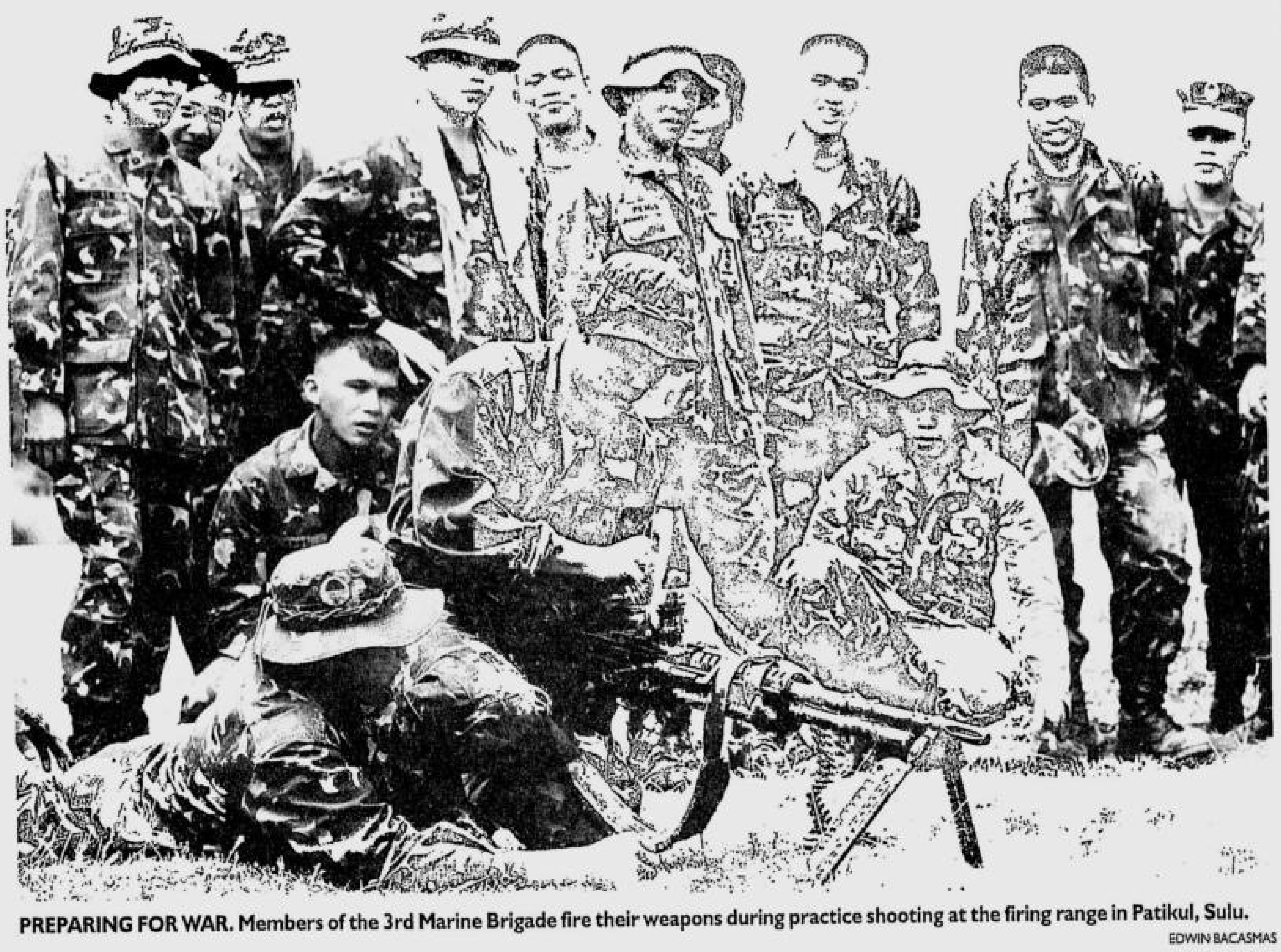
ZAMBOANGA CITY—Technical Sgt. Ruben Dumaual was firm in his decision to be reassigned in Sulu, where his son Emerson, a private first class soldier, was killed last week.

But the elder Dumaual, who is currently assigned with the Military Intelligence Battalion here, said revenge was farthest from his mind even if Emerson's death was too painful for him to bear.

"I am not going there to avenge his death. I only wanted to know which group was responsible for the death of my eldest son," he said, while tightly holding the white casket of his son as Armed Forces Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and Maj. Gen. Nehemias Pajarito, of the 1st Infantry Division, tried to console him on Sunday.

Emerson was among the 27 soldiers killed during separate attacks by Moro gunmen in Maimbung town on Aug. 9.

Dumaual said he also wanted to know why the military suffered too many casualties in a single day.



PREPARING FOR WAR. Members of the 3rd Marine Brigade fire their weapons during practice shooting at the firing range in Patikul, Sulu.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Unanswered questions

He said he was already processing the documents needed for his reassignment.

"I am volunteering there after the seven-day prayers are over," Dumaual said.

But while Dumaual appeared to be sober even with the death of his son, other widows and relatives of slain former Moro rebels integrated into the military called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to be decisive.

Warida Jammang, who lost her husband Pfc. Halid Jammang, said she wants to see the government enemies pulverized.

"It's better if the President sent thousands of soldiers to Sulu to knock some sense in the heads of the enemies there. They should be pulverized because they killed my husband and they destroyed the future of my children," Warida said.

Rhea Patua, widow of Cpl. Vito Patua of Little Baguio, Imelda, Zamboanga Sibugay, said it would be better if the operation would be conducted without let up.

"I am asking the President not to declare a ceasefire so that the Abu Sayyaf and other bad people in Sulu will be decimated," she said in the vernacular.

Relatives of Pfc. Kaisar Hassan said they would like to see the enemies being treated like chickens.

Lives more valuable

Earlier, Wilfreda Potoy, mother of Pfc. Rico Potoy said the government should also consider the future of those being left behind by soldiers killed in the offensives.

"It's alright if it is only money that is wasted but the reality is people are dying," she said in the vernacular.

Wilfreda said she believes that sending more soldiers would not solve the situation in Sulu.

"I believe there are ways to defeat the Abu Sayyaf and other rebels aside from sending more soldiers there," she said.

Sara Hashim, the wife of Pfc. Daim Hashim, said it would be better for the President to defer her plan of deploying more soldiers because it will only fuel the situation in Sulu.

Sara, a mother of eight, said she knows the area better because she hails from Barangay Alat in Jolo town.

"They should not do it while the situation is still tense," she said.

Sara also agreed that the President should consider the fate of families of soldiers, who are bound to be slain in Sulu, before pushing for the deployment.

"Pity the families," she said.

Other views

Victor Taylor, a peace advocate and researcher who frequents Sulu for more than three decades now, said the best way to solve a conflict situation like Sulu is "to make a sincere attempt to see things from the other's point of view."

"That way we can begin to truly understand the differences between us," he said.

Taylor suggested that both sides of the conflict must exert effort toward a peaceful resolution.

"But the government, as the parent or elder, must go out of its way and set the example for tolerance and understanding, taking belligerent positions from the outset such as 'hunting down the savages' only exacerbates the situation," he said.

Taylor, who speaks Tausug fluently and once taught at the Notre Dame of Jolo College in Jolo, Sulu, emphasized that "justice must be served."

"In Islam justice is a primary value. There can be no peace without justice, but it has to be appreciated by all sides as a pursuit of justice in their respective terms," he said. *Julie S. Alipala with reports from Edwin O. Fernandez and Nash B. Maulana, Inquirer Mindanao*

Slain soldier's mom won't hear peace pleas

MAUBAN, QUEZON—ALOHA Gamelon, still numbed and shocked over the loss of her only son, said she was not yet ready to join the call of other war orphans to stop the all-out armed combat in troubled Mindanao.

"I don't know if it's the right decision. I will leave everything to God whatever course of action that the government wants to take," the grieving mother of former Army 2nd Lt. Charlie Anthony Camelon said in an interview in their unfinished concrete house in the village of Bagong Bayan here.

However, her real feeling was apparent as she echoed the sentiment of Philippine Military Academy's "Maragtas" (Marangal na Tagapagligtas) Class of 2007 to which her son belonged.

THE SLAIN soldier's sister, Krisha, looks over the remains of her brother as a soldier stands at attention at the Camelons' house in Mauban town in Quezon. Camelon was the town's only PMA graduate.

DELFIN MALLARI JR./INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

"All of my son's mistahs were very angry. They all wanted to avenge his death," Aloha said in a firm voice.

Charlie's father, retired MSgt. Miguelito Camelon of the Army's Scout Rangers, like a professional soldier, declined to comment, saying the trouble in Mindanao had been an old issue.

"I could step on many toes," he said, without elaborating.

Despite the loss of his only son, the retired Army soldier, who spent 23 years in the service, could still manage to smile.

Death a job

"I'm a professional soldier. Death is an inevitable part of the profession. But deep inside me is an immeasurable grief because I just lost a son in battle," he said.

Last week, fighting erupted in Jolo where at least 60 people, including 27 soldiers, were killed.

The government blamed the Abu Sayyaf extremists and rogue fighters of Muslim secessionist rebel groups for the attacks.

Charlie, a platoon leader in the Army's 33rd Infantry Battalion, died in a three-hour gunfight with the Abu Sayyaf in the war-torn village of Tambaking in Maimbung town, Sulu province on Aug. 9, or two days after he celebrated his 22nd birthday.

Homecoming

Charlie's remains arrived here in Mauban, some 157 kilometers east-southeast of Manila at the western shore of Lamon Bay, on Monday afternoon.

The 22-year-old Mauban native has been recognized in this coastal town as the town's first and only PMA graduate so far.

According to former Quezon Board Member Eladio Pasamba, a native of this town, there was another local resident who also made it to the elite military school in Baguio City but was only able to reach second year then quit for unknown reasons.

"With Lieutenant Camelon's untimely but heroic death, Mauban also lost a future leader," said Pasamba.

> 'All of my son's mistahs were very angry. They all wanted to avenge his death…'

Aloha said she used to endearingly call the late Army officer as "Umbok" right after she gave birth to him in Moises Padilla town in Negros Occidental on Aug 7, 1985.

Named after a bird

"I gave him that nickname after a bird species. He was so healthy and lively just like Niño Muhlach. He was full of life just like the 'umbok' bird," he said with a smile.

When his son reached elementary school, the family decided to migrate to Mauban, the birth place of the elder Camelon.

"My son always brought honor to the family. And now, this heroism after he offered his life for the sake of peace in the country," she said with a cry.

Aloha recalled that the family had no inkling whatsoever that Charlie would someday follow his father's footstep.

"We just didn't know what changed his mind. Maybe only at the last minute after he passed the PMA examination because his father used to remind him that if he wanted to be a soldier like him, he should enter the service, not as an EP (enlisted person) but through the gates of the PMA," she said.

Sister

Charlie's only sibling, Krisha, 16, wearing a black PMA T-shirt, remembered the words of her brother the last time the entire family met him at the SM Mall in Lucena City three months ago.

"He asked me to take good care of our parents," the high school senior recalled without any premonition that it would be their last meeting.

One of Charlie's relatives narrated to the INQUIRER how the fallen soldier once dared his hometown circle of buddies during his PMA graduation celebration last March where the Camelons butchered a pig for the feast.

The relative remembered that Charlie had told his buddies that if ever he failed in his first assignment, his buddies should all shave their heads.

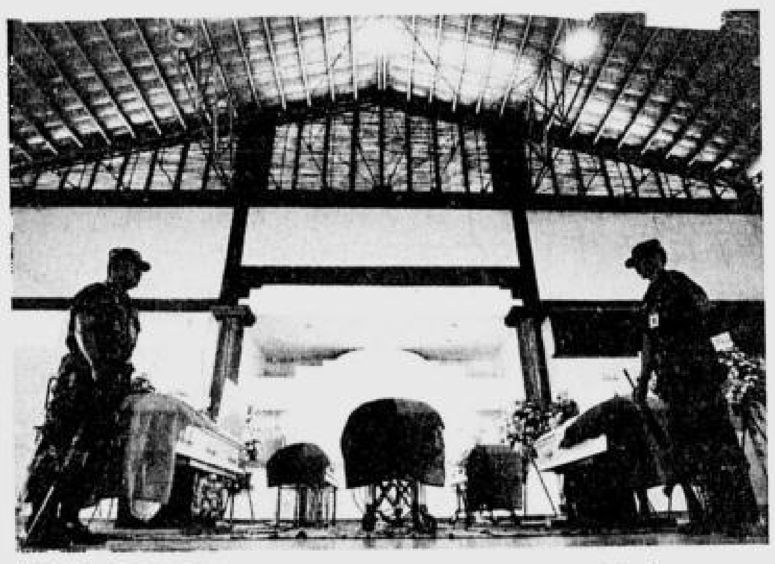
Unfortunately, not one from among Charlie's gang mates was around during the interview to comment on his death.

Oneness

But it was learned from a neighbor that Charlie's friends were all willing to accede to his condition but not because they had considered his untimely death in the battle field a failure but the act would rather be a testament of their unified salute to his heroism.

Several elegant wreaths from the Armed Forces of the Philippines top brass and Quezon Gov. Rafael Nantes adorned the doorstep of the Camelons' house.

A lone Army soldier in fatigues stood in attention beside the wooden coffin of the latest casualty from among PMA graduates. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*



HONOR guards keep watch on coffins at the Western Mindanao Command camp in Zamboanga City of Army soldiers who were killed in an attack by Moro gunmen in Jolo.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Senators back peace call from war widows

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

SENATORS YESTERDAY THREW their support to calls from the widows of the Marines who were slain in an attack by Moro gunmen in Basilan to stop deploying more troops in war-torn Mindanao to avoid further bloodbath.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said: "There is no question in my mind that those responsible for the atrocities should pay for their crimes. But the President should heed the people's wish to avoid unnecessary carnage."

Sen. Mar Roxas said the government must heed the widows' calls and "seek a peaceful alternative in the light of the heavy casualties suffered by our troops amid doubts on the intelligence (of the Armed Forces of the Philippines) and their weaponry."

"We support our soldiers and honor their sacrifices for the country. These soldiers and their families, more than anyone else, dedicate their lives to the value of true and lasting peace," said Roxas.

"To achieve this peace, we must empower the local communities and build strong, reform-oriented local governments and institutions in Basilan," he said.

"This way, the best solutions to peace and order will be in the hands of the local people rather than always drawn from the barrel of a gun," said Roxas in a text message.

Sen. Loren Legarda said: "While we must protect the citizenry from lawless violence and terrorism, government must continue the peace talks and engage in parallel poverty measures that have been long overdue."

Earlier, President Macapagal-Arroyo warned politicians against getting in the way of a planned offensive against members of the bandit and terrorist group Abu Sayyaf and what the military described as rogue units of the Moro National Liberation Front.

The President didn't mention names, but could be referring to members of the opposition in the Senate.

Roxas said on Tuesday that the government would spend at least P1 billion a month for the war on the Abu Sayyaf and rogue elements of the MNLF, money that the senators said could be spent for development projects and not entirely for war.

Red Cross has ₱100M left out of ₱200M for Guinsaugon folk

By Jani Arnaiz
Inquirer Visayas

MAASIN CITY—THE PHILIPPINE National Red Cross still has P100 million left out of the P200 million generated for the Guinsaugon tragedy.

PNRC Southern Leyte chapter administrator Romeo Orilla said that half of the P200 million, which came from the Federation of International Red Cross have been spent for the survivors of the Guinsaugon tragedy, including the construction of 96 duplex housing units in the barangays of Ayahag, Hinabian and Magatas and the purchase of new vehicles for the use of the local PNRC chapter.

"The Fed is very strict in the disbursement of funds. This is also one of the reasons we were delayed in the completion of the 96 duplex units in the relocation in Catmon village," Orilla said.

Last year, the winning contractor for the new housing site for the Guinsaugon survivors abandoned the project after getting 15 percent of the project cost. This prompted Sen. Richard Gordon, PNRC chair, to file a case against the contractor. There is no update yet on the case.

The housing project for the survivors is still being constructed more than a year after the mudslide that killed about a thousand and left the same number of people missing when a portion of Mt. Kan-abag broke and buried the entire village of Guinsaugon in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte in February last year.

"We were thankful that the Fed has loosened up a bit, we could now purchase locally available materials for the housing project," Orilla said.

He added that before the project was abandoned, it was very hard to follow the strict purchase procedures because there were specified materials.

Orilla said about 50 percent of the housing units were completed and would be ready for occupancy by November this year.

He said the beneficiaries of the project remain housed in cramped shelters at the St. Bernard Central School and Catmon Elementary School.

BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

DAVAO'S STAR
A man peddling durian, the smelly, but sought after fruit that made Davao City famous among other things, passes by a row of durian stalls in his bicycle contraption loaded with durian. The harvest season for durian started in time for the city's celebration of the Kadayawan Festival.

80,000 cops donate day's wages to help Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—AT LEAST 80,000 police officers, or 75 percent of the police force in the country, donated a day's wages to build two school buildings in Albay province and to conduct feeding programs and medical missions.

Dubbed "Tulong ng mga pulis para sa mga mag-aaral at komunidad," the project was able to raise a total of P2.9 million from the voluntary contributions of policemen and women nationwide, said Senior Supt. Balligi Agnanayon Tira, Bicol police director in charge.

A policeman's daily wage ranges from P300 to P1,200 depending on his rank and post.

Different PNP units in the National Capital Region and Bicol region donated an additional amount of P122,000.

Supt. Eliciar Bron, Bicol police spokesperson, said the project seeks to ease classroom shortage in public schools after the series of typhoons which ravaged Bicol late last year.

On Tuesday, police officials led by Director Emmanuel Carta of the Police Community Relations Division in Camp Crame, Quezon City held groundbreaking ceremonies at the Gogon Central School in Legazpi City and at the Guinobatan East Central School.

Bron added that funds donated by the cops also supported a feeding program and a medical and dental mission for the villagers and pupils.

In Tiwi, Albay, American company Chevron Geothermal Phils. Holdings Inc., which operates a 1,800-hectare geothermal plant, also donated typhoon-proof classrooms worth P5 million to three poor public schools here.

Designed to withstand 300-km-per-hour winds, the 8 meter by 7 meter classrooms were built in Barangay Cale and Misibis and at the host community of the Tiwi geothermal project in Barangay Libjo.

Libjo Elementary School principal Blandina Cuevillas said the project benefited 56 Grade 1 pupils who used to hold classes in makeshift classrooms and had to endure heat from the galvanized iron sheets.

"We are thankful some generous hearts donated this facility to us. Without this donation, we could not afford to rebuild what was destroyed by Supertyphoon Reming," Cuevillas said.

She added they could not rely on government calamity funds which hardly reached their town.

In Cale Elementary School, principal Nelie Cope said the school library will be transferred to one of the classrooms donated by Chevron.

"It will be better to store our books there since it is stormproof. During the typhoons, all our reading materials and textbooks were either damaged or destroyed," Cope said.

The reconstruction program was done in partnership with the Aquinas University Foundation as the project implementor, Tiwi local government unit, Department of Education, and Ayala Foundation USA.

The DepEd was allotted P1.3 billion under the Calamity Assistance Emergency Response (Care) fund for the repair and reconstruction of school buildings in the six Bicol provinces.

Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Church, lay groups unite vs fund use for dredging

By Jaymee T. Gamil
Legazpi City

THE MOVE TO DEclare the Yawa River in Legazpi City as an open quarrying site has gained momentum with no less than the Church leading a multisectoral group that formed a task force which will also push for the approval of a labor-intensive dredging method.

The method was proposed by an employee of the Department of Public Works and Highways Bicol office.

Led by the diocesan Social Action Center (SAC), the group organized the "Task Force People's Quarry," aimed at pushing for transforming the river into an open quarry site and adopting a labor-intensive dredging of its bed.

The move, based on estimates made by DPWH employee Romeo Esplana, could save around P465 million out of the P655-million budget allocated for dredging projects in Albay, while providing income for typhoon survivors.

THE LUCAS home is buried in dried mud and rocks from Mayon volcano in Barangay Maipon in Guinobatan, Albay, one of the towns hardest hit by mud and lahar flows from Mayon volcano at the height of Supertyphoon "Reming." NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Consensus building

The decision to come up with "Task Force People's Quarry" was made during a forum on Monday attended by Bishop Lucilo Quiambao of Legazpi and the local clergy, the Urban Poor Federation of Legazpi City, nongovernment units, members of the academe, city engineers, the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council, the media, and Esplana.

The forum allowed different sectors to air their concerns so that a consensus could be met on how the labor-intensive dredging proposal could be further refined and systematized.

In the INQUIRER story published July 10, Esplana, a staff member of the DPWH regional legal office, revealed his proposal for a labor-intensive method to deepen and widen the Yawa River using hand tools to dredge and quarry sand, gravel and boulders.

The Yawa River is integral in receiving and holding floodwater coming from the gullies of the Mayon volcano, especially during typhoons.

Esplana suggested that the river be turned into an open quarrying site, with 15,000 unemployed Typhoon "Reming" survivors as a possible workforce.

"The labor-intensive method could save around P465 million out of the P655 million budget allocated for dredging projects here, while providing a much-needed source of livelihood for typhoon victims," he said.

Alternatives

He also suggested that instead of earth-dikes, concrete piles should be set in place to reinforce the Yawa River banks.

The proposal opposed the expensive mechanized dredging and diking projects already being conducted by DPWH contractors in the river since January.

In a phone interview, DPWH regional director Orlando Roces said Esplana was not authorized to make his proposal public since he has yet to prove its viability and effectivity.

"We have been asking him for technical and operational details, but he has failed to submit them. His proposal has no other basis but his personal estimates. That is not very credible because he is not even an engineer," Roces said.

He also said that Esplana had failed to report to work altogether and respond to a memorandum that was issued him.

Running out of time

"Our main problem is risk reduction. We do not know for sure that labor-intensive dredging is more effective, especially since it is not ideal for large-scale projects like the Yawa River," he said.

He also pointed out that time was crucial as typhoons could strike soon, and that mechanized projects could finish jobs faster than manual labor.

John Abejuro, SAC executive secretary for operations, likewise said flood control was the immediate issue, but agreed with Esplana's findings.

"The current dredging and diking projects prove to be ineffective and unsustainable. The Yawa River bed is still shallow and the aggregate piles slide back into the water during rain. We need another way to do it," he said.

"The manual dredging method is ideal because it also opens economic benefits for a larger public. Less contractual deals also mean less chances of corruption," he added.

However, of particular concern to Quiambao and other participants during the Task Force People's Quarry forum was the funding for the proposed labor-intensive dredging.

Baguio councilor toys with idea of online legislation for city

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—FILIPINOS who work online know the value of Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia produced, edited and updated by practically everyone on the planet.

A Baguio-based advocacy group, which proposed to tap online tools to widen access to education, uses "wiki" (a type of collaborative website), for example, to promote projects.

Elmer Soriano, president of Thinklab Solutions Inc., has tried to interest the city government in a Baguio Wikipedia concept that would allow residents to upload their own recollections and stories about the summer capital in time for the city's centennial in 2009.

'This is just the beginning of a vibrant e-democracy culture...'

But the door Wikipedia has opened is in what Soriano now calls "wikislation."

Online blackboards

Residents in a community may open "online blackboards" similar to what Wikipedia offers to online users, where they can introduce ideas or push issues that a legislator or a government official may address.

"Wiki is not a brand name. It's a class of software such as the more common word processor," Soriano said.

"Social software, such as wiki, has powerful democratizing effect. It is like an online town hall meeting that anyone can participate in 24 [hours]/7 [days a week]. Even a shy, soft spoken citizen can participate in the online forum from his bedroom, in his pajamas," Soriano told the INQUIRER in an online interview.

"'Wikislation' will allow local government units to harness the 'wisdom of the crowds' and engage its citizens to become active participants in governance," Soriano said.

This is a working concept that can be carried all the way to the offices of Congress or to President Macapagal-Arroyo, he said.

Soriano said local politics is ripe for "wikislation."

Poll use

Political candidates made full use of the Internet during this year's local elections, according to reports of the Commission on Elections.

Senatorial, congressional and even local government candidates campaigned over blogs (web logs), which are virtual diaries that can be opened to every online user.

At least three candidates vying for the city mayoral post used blogs, including Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. and former Vice Mayor Leandro Yangot Jr.

A website set up by a 17-year-old girl in Cebu City has generated an online petition supporting the presidential bid of a senator.

But it is Davao City Councilor Peter Lavina who chose to pilot "wikislation" after Soriano failed to draw interest from the Baguio government.

Lavina opened www.tocouncilorlavina.pbwiki.com and has been entertaining inputs regarding the proposed reopening of the Chinese consulate there, or that city's public health system.

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon
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Gov't rice go to black market in Bicol

By Bobby Q. Labalan
Sorsogon City

A BIG VOLUME OF GOVERNMENT rice being distributed by the National Food Authority, through the so-called Bigasan ng Bayan, end up in black markets.

An official of the NFA Sorsogon office made this admission after a Bigasan operator told the INQUIRER how some of the agency's personnel connived with unscrupulous rice traders in diverting government rice to the black market.

Helen Borlagdan, assistant provincial manager of NFA-Sorsogon, said they could hardly monitor the distribution of NFA rice once it is out of the agency's warehouse in Barangay Cabid-an in Sorsogon City.

Earlier, Sorsogon City policemen, led by police chief Supt. Adan Magdasoc, intercepted a truckload of NFA rice on suspicion it would be smuggled out of the province.

Magdasoc ordered the temporary custody of the truck loaded with 225 bags of NFA rice after its driver admitted that he was transporting the goods to Tigaon, Camarines Sur in the evening of Aug. 3.

The rice were consigned to three Bigasan ng Bayan sa Palengke (BGP) operators in Juban, Casiguran and Irosin towns but the truck belonged to Vinagre Rice Mill in Camarines Sur, which is said to be owned by an officer of the Grains Retailers Confederation (Grecon).

Based on receipts shown by the driver, the rice were sold to C. Ng of Irosin, Sorsogon, A. Garcia of Casiguran and C. Espayos of Juban, said to be BGP operators.

The truck, however, was ordered released the following day by an official of the Philippine National Police whom Magdasoc refused to identify.

Favored operators purchase huge quantities of NFA rice with the use of multiple passbooks that are in the name of other operators

Nothing new

A source, who requested anonymity, told the INQUIRER that the sale in large quantities of government rice to black market traders had long been a practice at the NFA office in the city.

The source, also a Bigasan ng Bayan operator, said NFA rice were sold to the traders by as much as P950 per bag, way above its regular price of P825.

Government rice is supposed to be sold at P18 per kilo to poor consumers as part of the government's rice stabilization program through the BGP, Outside the Market (OTM) outlets and Tindahan ng Bayan.

BGP operators were given as many as 25 bags per week while OTM and Tindahan were given a quota of 20 bags but were oftentimes granted only 5 to 7 bags weekly.

The source said favored operators, who have contacts inside (the NFA), could buy as many as 1000 bags of rice but at a higher price.

WORKERS unload sacks of rice from the Vietnam cargo ship in the port of Tabaco, Albay. The National Food Authority (NFA) imports 10,800 metric tons of rice from Vietnam due to shortage of supply.
EDWIN BACASMAS

The rice are re-milled by the buyers and sold at a much higher price, she added.

The NFA rice were of good quality thus they were easy to pass off as commercial rice, she said.

The source admitted being involved in such transactions but did not re-mill the NFA rice and instead sold them to another buyer.

Multiple passbooks

She said she had just purchased 1000 bags of rice at the time INQUIRER interviewed her.

She named some Chinese rice traders, who were also given the same favor by some NFA officials, but she requested not to divulge their names.

Favored operators purchase huge quantities of NFA rice with the use of multiple passbooks that are in the name of other operators, she said.

Traders and their contacts inside the NFA use the term "ending" to signify the trader's intention to purchase beyond the quota.

The source revealed that after the supertyphoons hit the Bicol region last year, an aide of a government official from a regional office offered her 5,000 bags of government rice but the transaction fizzled out after the "middle man" demanded a much higher price during the pay off.

She said even traders from outside Sorsogon province were able to buy government rice in huge volumes as long as they could afford the "going rate."

The source mentioned a certain "Gigi Santos" from Camarines Sur who was known to be close to some NFA regional officials who could purchase government rice as the supply would allow.

A former officer of the Grecon in Sorsogon City said stock manipulation was known to Grecon officers but they kept silent about it for fear they would be blacklisted.

But Eflida Ng, incumbent Grecon provincial president, vehemently denied any knowledge about the deals and angrily confronted this correspondent during their chance meeting on Aug. 8 at the NFA office.

Ng secretly took pictures of this correspondent and said in Filipino "*kapag sobra na dapat ng bawasan* (enough is enough)."

When confronted she denied that it was a threat.

Aboveboard

Borlagdan denied the revelations by the source saying all sales of government rice were aboveboard.

She said no one among them in the NFA was ever involved in the shady deals mentioned by the informant.

The number of bags allowed per operator depends entirely on the provincial manager, she added.

In explaining the unusually huge volume of rice intercepted by the police, she said the manager may increase or decrease the quota any time.

She said provincial manager Cesar Barcelona decided to increase the quota of BGP operators to 75 bags each last Aug. 3.

In a text message to the INQUIRER, Barcelona said he had already imposed a penalty on the erring traders for stock diversion and ordered the immediate cancellation of their rice allocations indefinitely.

Awarded Mindoro cop gets help from 'enemy'

By Madonna T. Virola
City of Calapan

SENIOR POLICE OFFICER GEROILAN "ROY" Pajarillo Mudanza was an awardee during a recent search for the Country's Outstanding Policemen in Service by the Metrobank Foundation and the Rotary Club of New Manila East.

What is interesting is that a jailed former leader of the National Democratic Front was instrumental in preparing the requirements for the award.

"The board of judges was surprised to hear that a former leader of the NDF/NPA helped package my requirements for the award," said Mudanza, provincial team leader of the regional intelligence unit of the Mimaropa (Mindoro Marinduque Romblon Palawan) police office in Camp Vicente Lim in Laguna.

"He fits my concept of a police officer for the masses—one who carries out his duty, is honest, respects the rules of engagement…" said Eduardo Serrano, Mudanza's former enemy in the insurgency battlefield and now a detainee at the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Jail (OMPJ).

Serrano spent three years at the OMPJ where he worked closely with prison officials in conducting livelihood, health and paralegal projects for the prisoners.

He was transferred to Camp Crame on Aug. 12 after a Quezon City regional trial court ordered OMPJ warden retired police Supt. Rolando Gonzalez to bring him to detention quarters in Camp Crame in consideration of the political nature of his case.

Serrano and two women, tagged by the military as NPA members, were arrested by police and Army intelligence men on May 2, 2004.

Serrano facilitated the formation of a multipurpose cooperative, which enabled the prisoners to purchase their basic necessities, while helping coordinate income-generating activities such as abaca crafts-production, kite-making, Christmas decors-making and candle-making for the inmates and their families.

Serrano is now pursuing a masteral degree on Environment and Natural Resources at the Open University of the University of the Philippines.

Justice

Mudanza's award was most welcomed by his family.

"People in our town couldn't believe that my husband is a national awardee," said his wife Winnie, a public elementary school teacher.

"We felt vindicated that after many years of made-up stories by some politicians to destroy me, justice prevailed," said Mudanza who is based in Oriental Mindoro.

For security reasons, Mudanza could not just roam his town after he got the ire of politicians whom he had contradicted.

"He wears a helmet so as not to be recognized. He is better known in the mountains and other towns where he works on his assignments," said his wife.

ORIENTAL Mindoro Provincial Jail warden retired police Supt. Rolando Gonzalez, SPO2 Geroilan "Roy" Pajarillo Mudanza and Eduardo Serrano.
MADONNA T. VIROLA

Mudanza helped the Aeta families settle in a cogonal parcel of land that had been covered by the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program and subsequently foreclosed by a bank.

The help started more than a decade ago when Mudanza met a group of Aeta people along a river in Pinamalayan town. In jest, he told them to go to Bansud town for land so they didn't have to wander.

Unaware that land was a serious concern for the Aeta folk, Mudanza was surprised one day to see five from that group at his doorstep in Bansud, about 3 kilometers from Pinamalayan.

He referred them to the barangay chair who guided them to the parcel of land.

More than 30 Aeta families from Cavite, Laguna, Quezon, Negros, Iloilo and parts of Bicol became the first settlers in that piece of land.

Then a few non-Aeta families and CARP beneficiaries also arrived to make use of the more than 400 hectares of uncultivated land for settlement.

They have since increased to more than 100 today and call Mudanza their "Kuya" (elder brother) for acting as such in times of hunger, calamity, threats from those who want their land, and those who accuse them of being New People's Army members.

"The nominee was able to 'resettle' and not just 'relocate' a wandering group of Aetas. And by helping them establish a source of living, coupled with an educational opportunity and security of tenure to their abode, these people would be prevented from becoming victims of criminal acts that they may not resist, especially when their families are unjustly treated and eventually impoverished by the long tentacles of poverty and helplessness," said Serrano in his writeup on Mudanza as nominee.

Mudanza was able to work out a housing project for the Aeta folk from a diocesan program of the Apostolic Vicariate of Calapan and the Couples for Christ of Roxas town, and the Gawad Kalinga once an agreement was finalized with the mayor.

Organizing

Since 1969, as an intelligence officer of the second police district command under the leadership of then Inspector Rolando Gonzales, Mudanza helped establish the Bayanihan Pederasyon of Silangang Mindoro among the village officials and village watchpersons in the fight against criminality and insurgency.

In 2003, almost 90 percent of village officials surrendered their unlicensed firearms for proper accreditation.

The federation is now in almost all the municipalities of the province, with about 3,000 members, including the City of Calapan.

Since 1994, Mudanza has been extending assistance to 50 rebel returnees (RRs) in Bansud.

The RRs grew tired of fighting and had personal problems affecting their families or loved ones, said Serrano.

Mudanza helped clear the names of these RRs and encouraged them to start a new life until they became models to the farmer-settlers in cultivating the abandoned land and domesticating farm animals.

He complemented the efforts of Gonzales, his commanding officer, in regularly visiting the RRs and strictly prohibited any operating force in the hinterlands to use them as guides in military operations against their former comrades.

Mudanza helped in following up their applications for livelihood funds intended for RRs. These RRs then volunteered as village watchpersons.

Mudanza and Gonzalez are exerting effort to secure 40 slots from the Gawad Kalinga for them to be installed in Sitio Narra, Barangay Villa Pag-Asa in Bansud.

"Being a part of their extended families, these rebel-returnees became familiar acquaintances during special occasions of the Gonzales' family and on holidays sharing the fruits of their labor and love from their respective families," said Serrano.

Community service

Mudanza has also been assisting beneficiaries of land reform in Barangay Conrazon, Bansud since June 2004.

He encouraged the beneficiaries to make more productive the abandoned pasture land. He hoped that by this, the farmers would keep their trust in the government and not resort to illegal ways.

He mobilized the youth in community projects like the sandbagging operations during the floods that hit Calapan City and its adjacent towns in December 2005.

For outstanding performance in service, Mudanza received several awards as police intelligence officer, including a special award in 2005 from the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the arrest of Geronimo Zuñiga who was wanted in the United States for stabbing to death his former wife about 20 years ago.

Now, prayers to end the rains urged

By Nikko Dizon

TAGAYTAY CITY—MANILA Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales is amused with the jokes blaming the heavy rains on the *Oratio Imperata Ad Petendam Pluviam* he had instructed to be prayed in all churches in his diocese to implore the heavens for rains and avert a water crisis.

Some people, he said, have even suggested that perhaps the prayer for rains should now be stopped.

"*Ito'y mga biro lang ng mga tao. May nagsasabi* 'Cardinal, *itigil na natin ang oratio* (These are just jokes. Some say 'Cardinal, let's stop the prayer),'" the cardinal told reporters yesterday.

"*Malilito ang Diyos sa atin*(God may get confused)!" he laughed.

Rosales pointed out that threats of a crisis, such as a dry spell brought by global warming, continue to loom.

So there will be no letting up on the *Oratio Imperata*, the cardinal said. "The prayers will continue."

"What would we rather have, floods or a water crisis?" Rosales continued in Tagalog.

But he also expressed concern over the damage brought by yesterday's heavy rains.

The rains fell only a few days after Rosales issued the instruction to his diocese to pray the *Oratio Imperata* early this month.

It was said that Rosales' predecessor, the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, also issued an *Oratio Imperata* at the height of the El Niño phenomenon some 10 years ago. The rains did fall and did not stop for days. Even then, the jovial prelate supposedly joked that maybe, it was time to ask God to stop the rains.

Meanwhile, Rosales, together with Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, at least 15 bishops and more than 100 guests, braved yesterday's heavy rains for the blessing and inauguration of the St. John Mary Vianney-Galilee development and retreat center for priests here.

The renewal center, a first in the country, is a project of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines—Commission on the Clergy, which Rosales heads.

SCHOOLCHILDREN carry their belongings as they wade through a flooded street in Manila Wednesday. Traffic was snarled for hours and stranded thousands of motorists. REUTERS

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No classes in all levels in Metro, 5 provinces

By Christine O. Avendaño

THERE WILL BE NO CLASSES in all levels today in Metro Manila and five other provinces—Bataan, Rizal, Laguna, Cavite and Batangas—due to the expected heavy rains brought by typhoon Egay.

This was announced last night by National Disaster Coordinating Council Executive Director Glen Rabonza who said President Macapagal-Arroyo approved the NDCC recommendation for the suspension of classes in these areas.

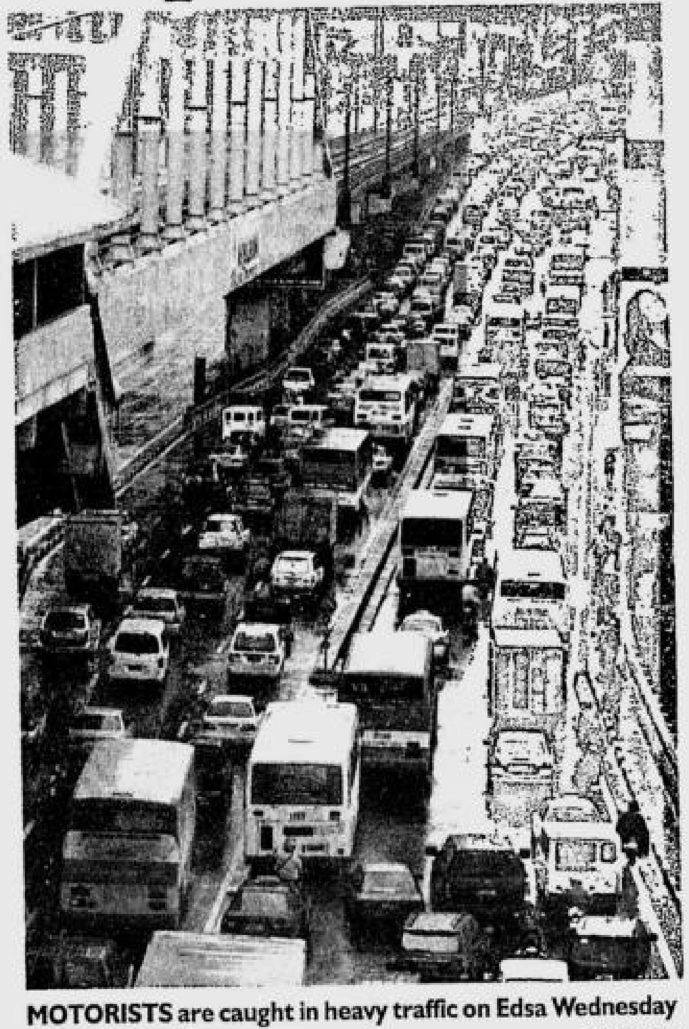
Meanwhile, President Macapagal-Arroyo called out the military to help untangle traffic and ferry home people stranded due to the downpour and floods in Metro Manila yesterday.

Military information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said the President directed the Armed Forces to help the police in ensuring the smooth flow of traffic in the streets.

"There were many areas in the city where traffic was so heavy; that was why the President directed the AFP to assist in fixing the problem," Bacarro said.

AFP Metro Manila commander Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino said his command sent six military trucks to ferry stranded motorists in Quezon City and other areas.

Dolorfino also said his command provided three rubber boats in flooded barangay Hagdang Bato in Mandaluyong City.



MOTORISTS are caught in heavy traffic on Edsa Wednesday after a heavy downpour. REM ZAMORA

Even cops helped stranded motorists and commuters

By Alcuin Papa

HEAVY MONSOON RAINS brought floods—and horrendous traffic jams—to most of Metro Manila yesterday as the Philippine National Police (PNP) mobilized its resources to assist stranded commuters and residents.

According to the PNP Tactical Operations Center, only the northern part of Metro Manila to include Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela and Pasig City and San Juan were spared from heavy flooding.

In other areas, floodwaters made major roads unpassable to light vehicles.

In Marikina, flooding was reported in the areas of Tumana, Malanday, Concepcion Uno, Barangay Sto. Niño, the Molave District in Marikina Heights, Barangay San Roque, and Fortune.

Flooding was also recorded at the corner of Shaw Boulevard and Kalentong, the areas of Barangay Salapan and Balon Bato, and the Maysilo Circle near the Mandaluyong City Hall.

In Manila, flooded streets included España near the University of Santo Tomas; Adriatico, Quirino, Sta. Ana, Pedro Gil, Taft and Padre Faura; and Pureza in Sta. Mesa.

In Makati City, the corner of Dela Rosa and Washington streets, near Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue (Buendia)was also flooded.

In Quezon City, floods were reported along V. Luna, Anonas, Kamias, Betty Go-Belmonte and Ilang-Ilang. The northbound lane of White Plains Avenue and parts of Katipunan Avenue also experienced heavy traffic.

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DID YOU KNOW

OF THE 69 hospitals in the country ran by the Department of Health, almost 30 percent or 20 hospitals are in the National Capital Region. These include the National Kidney Institute, the Lung Center of the Philippines and the Philippine Heart Center.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Baywalk bar owners owe Manila ₱7M in unpaid dues

'Pacquiao concessionare fees still unpaid'

By Allison W. Lopez

AN ESTIMATED P7 MILLION IN UNPAID DUES has yet to be collected by the Manila City Treasurer's Office from Baywalk bar owners that include boxing champ Manny Pacquiao.

The owners dismantled their stalls along the popular strip on Roxas Boulevard last week after the city government issued them notices of demolition. Mayor Alfredo Lim said the establishments did not have permits. They also had not paid their dues to the treasurer's office.

Henry Galang, chief administrative officer of the City General Services Office, confirmed that Pacquiao's Knockout Bar still owed the city government P120,000 for four months worth of "concessionaire's fees" from April to July.

The bar's last payment was made in March.

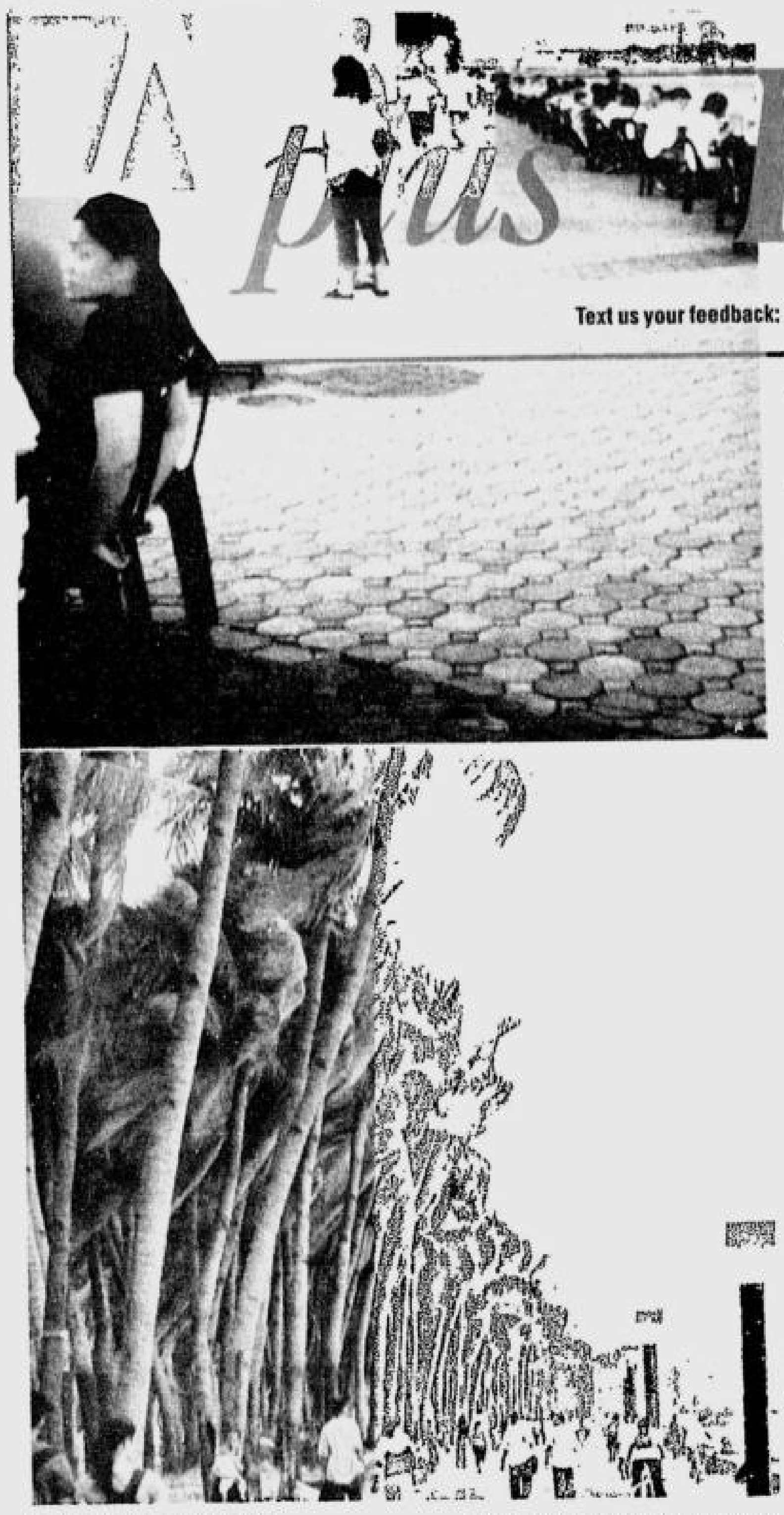
Galang said the restaurants were charged a monthly concessionaire fee of P30,000.

The city official said their office, which is tasked to monitor payments, already issued notices of payment to the owners in July and were preparing new demand letters for this month.

The City Treasurer's Office, he added, would also issue notices asking for payment within five days since its personnel are in charge of collecting the amounts due.

"Their concern is the city's income, so their notices are stricter," said Galang.

The administrative officer said the bars only had a memorandum of agreement with then Mayor Lito Atienza to conduct their business in Baywalk, but did not have permits to operate.



THEN AND NOW CONTRIBUTED PHOTO AND ROGER CARPIO

Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard (top) used to be bustling with people looking for a good time and a few drinks. Fewer people now frequent the area after Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim ordered the closure of the strip of bars and restaurants when he found out that these were operating without permits.

2 'brokers' face estafa raps

By Tina G. Santos

TWO WOMEN WERE ARRESTED by National Bureau of Investigation agents in Makati City after they allegedly posed as real estate brokers and defrauded a company of millions of pesos.

Mary Ann Ello and Lourdes Castillo, both of Makati City, were charged with estafa in the Makati Prosecutor's Office.

The charge was based on a complaint filed by Bella Vista Trading and Holdings Inc. which accused the suspects of selling to the firm a unit at the One Roxas Triangle Condominium for a bargain price of P9 million. The duo allegedly showed to the buyer documents bearing the faked signature of the original owner.

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Metro waterworld: Massive flooding, garbage-filled drainage

By the Metro staff

TRAFFIC WAS EXTREMELY heavy in many parts of Metro Manila yesterday as strong rains spawned by the southwest monsoon and Typhoon "Egay" led to massive flooding in many thoroughfares.

As a result, many commuters were stranded or forced to wade through floodwaters while the patience of motorists was worn thin by the snail-paced flow of traffic.

The situation in the metropolis eventually prompted the Department of Education to suspend classes in all levels at around 9:30 a.m.

Even Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay was not spared the inconveniences of the downpour as the front of his house on Mayapis St. became submerged in knee-high water.

But unlike most people who had to trudge through the flooded streets, the mayor just made a call and was on his merry way to City Hall—on board a fire truck.

"You see, I'm wearing an Americana (suit)," Binay joked, partly in explanation, during his regular Wednesday press conference.

"It was impossible for any car to negotiate the street so I had to call for a fire truck," he said.

A number of thoroughfares in Makati City were also submerged in water, including Medina Street in Barangay Pio del Pilar, according to a report from the city engineering and public works department.

Knee-deep waters also drenched Don Chino Roces Avenue, particularly the areas fronting Don Bosco and the Makati Cinema Square, while six-inch high floods were recorded on J.P. Rizal,. Makati Avenue to N. Garcia Street.

Commuters lined the sidewalks as jeepneys, tricycles and even buses were forced to stop plying their routes, especially on Sen. Gil Puyat and Taft Avenues.

Power went out in some parts of Quezon City while both lanes of Edsa were clogged from the Muñoz market in Roosevelt Avenue to Santolan Road after waist-deep floods formed at the foot of the flyover near Main Avenue in Cubao.

Traffic was also heavy in both lanes of Katipunan Avenue in Loyola Heights near the Ateneo de Manila University and on Araneta Avenue.

In some areas of Mandaluyong City, floodwaters reached waist-high level, said Jimmy Isidro, City Hall spokesperson.

A portion of the perimeter wall of Nayon ng Kabataan, a facility run by the social welfare department, collapsed after heavy rains weakened its foundation. There were no immediate reports of casualties, Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral told the INQUIRER.

Meanwhile, officials were closely monitoring the water level of major bodies of water in their respective areas, such as the Marikina, Pasig and Montalban rivers.

In San Mateo, Rizal province, eight families were evacuated after a landslide destroyed their houses in Purok Dos, Silangan in the morning. No one was reported hurt or injured in the incident.

Flooding was also reported in low-lying areas in Manila, including Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard, Pureza and Altura Streets in Sta. Mesa; España, Lacson and Dapitan Streets in Sampaloc; and T. M. Kalaw and

METRO/A18

BAREFOOT, wet and cold, two students in Makati City try to get a ride that would take them home after classes were called off yesterday in Metro Manila.

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Lacson, Pimentel, Erap can't set foot in US

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IF FORMER PRESIDENT ERAP, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel and former Rep. Arnulfo Fuentebella set foot in the United States and any US territory, they'll immediately be arrested and charged with espionage.

Two of their alleged conspirators—former police Senior Supt. Michael Ray Aquino and FBI agent Leandro Aragoncillo—have been sentenced by US courts for espionage.

Erap, Lacson, Pimentel and Fuentebella were allegedly the end-users of documents stolen from US classified files about the situation in the country.

If any one of you guys doesn't believe what I'm saying, try going to the United States. Let's see what will happen.

* * *

Whereas before a prospective "jueteng" financer only had to talk to the police regional director and the provincial director to be allowed to operate in a certain locality, now he has to have the approval of personalities in Manila called *"Tatlong Hari"* (Three Kings).

The *Tatlong Hari* are allegedly from Camp Crame and the Department of Interior and Local Government.

One of them reportedly has his finger in every pie and has tentacles at the Manila piers, where smuggling takes place.

* * *

Undersecretary Antonio Villar, head of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group (PASG), has "grounded" one of his trusted men after reports reached him about the latter's alleged smuggling and extortion activities at the piers. The guy had volunteered to act as Villar's "eyes and ears" since he's covering the customs beat for his newspaper, a tabloid and reportedly an officer of a newsman's club.

But what Villar didn't know is that the guy allegedly has a brokerage firm which facilitates the release of highly dutiable goods from the piers.

Mr. Undersecretary, just because the guy poses as a journalist doesn't mean he can be trusted.

* * *

A top officer of the Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) has ordered two Marines assigned as bodyguards to Cherrie Akbar, one of the wives of Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar.

This has caused grumbling in the ranks of the Marines in Basilan because they suspect Akbar's men took part in the beheading of their comrades.

Likewise, Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga, Marine commandant, was allegedly overheard by an informant in his office, as ordering a Marine officer in Basilan to provide security to Gov. Jum Akbar, the congressman's favorite wife.

If that's not consorting with the enemy, I don't know what is.

* * *

Davao City Regional Trial Court Judge Emmanuel Carpio has been cleared of sexual harassment charges by the Supreme Court.

Carpio, however, was admonished "to avoid any act or conduct that would in any way diminish public trust and confidence in the courts and the individuals representing the institution."

Why did Carpio get away with a serious charge and why was he just given a slap on the wrist?

How true is the story that Carpio has two relatives at the high tribunal?

* * *

The Bureau Fire Protection (BFP) has banned volunteer firefighters from helping in putting out fires, limiting their job to just passing water to professional firemen.

I don't know the reason for the ban, but I can guess.

Fire volunteers, mostly Chinese-Filipinos, are almost always first at the scene of any fire.

BFP firemen come 15 to 30 minutes later.

The situation has become a constant embarrassment to BFP firemen.

Fire volunteers always got the credit for putting out fires because by the time the professionals arrived, there are no more fires to extinguish.

Another reason is even more embarrassing to the professionals.

Fire volunteers, who are mostly rich Chinese businessmen or their scions, don't go around looking for loot in the homes of fire victims.

Mother's plea to Manila court : Show me my son

By Allison W. Lopez

THE MOTHER OF A SUSPECTED THIEF who was arrested last June and has been missing since then yesterday filed a petition for habeas corpus at the Manila Regional Trial Court.

In her petition, Susan Opon Salino asked the court to order Levy Arce, an executive assistant assigned to the Office of Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, and Chief Insp. Bernardino Cubacub, commander of the police precinct at Plaza Lawton, to produce her son, Alvin.

She also asked the court to summon the respondents and explain why Alvin was detained.

Salino, a resident of Taytay, Rizal, said she has not seen nor heard from her 21-year-old son since he was accused of picking the pocket of a photographer who was covering Lim's oath-taking at the Bonifacio Shrine on June 30. A photo published in a tabloid the following day showed Cubacub and Arce with the suspect following his arrest.

Cubacub was at the shrine to keep the peace and ensure that the oath-taking proceeded smoothly.

Salino expressed fear that her son could have been summarily executed after she failed to find him after she visited all police stations in Manila and failed to find him. There was also no police report made of Alvin's arrest, she added.

The National Bureau of Investigation stepped into the case last month and summoned Arce and Cubacub to shed light on Alvin's disappearance, but only Cubacub showed up.

Cubacub denied having arrested Alvin and told the NBI that he merely told Arce, who claimed the victim had also tried to steal his wallet, to take Alvin to the nearest police station.

Arce claimed the suspect was able to escape from him as he was being taken to a police station.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to contact Arce for comment because work had been suspended in government offices yesterday due to heavy rains.

Wayward truck kills worker in San Juan

A MAN looks at the spot where a factory worker was killed after he was hit by a wayward truck in San Juan City. Three other workers were injured in the incident. The truck driver told police that he lost control of the vehicle. ERIK ARAZAS

By Kristine L. Alave

A FACTORY WORKER WAS KILLED AND three were hurt when a truck slammed into a factory compound in San Juan City yesterday morning.

San Juan police chief Supt. Rodelio Jocson identified the lone fatality as Vicente Polioso, a worker at Asahi Electrical Manufacturing located at 117 P. Parada St., Barangay Sta. Lucia, San Juan City.

According to Jocson, Polioso sustained severe injuries in his head and different parts of the body. He died on the spot.

Police also identified the other Asahi employees who were injured as Danny Piamonte, Jufil Soperales and Noel Enriquez. They were taken to the Cardinal Santos Medical Center for treatment.

An initial investigation showed that the Isuzu Elf truck, with plate number XEC 962 driven by Danilo Buban, swerved into the factory compound and hit the victims at about 10:15 a.m.

Police said Buban, 36 and a Caloocan City resident, claimed to have lost control of the brakes. The truck, Jocson said, was going downhill on the slippery road when the incident took place. Police are also investigating the possibility that parts of the engine malfunctioned because of the floodwaters that seeped inside the truck.

Buban, who was immediately arrested, was detained at the San Juan City police police. He is facing charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, frustrated homicide and damage to property.

Who's afraid of Gonzalez? Not this Manila prosecutor

By Allison W. Lopez

SAYING HE WAS NOT SCARED OF JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Manila Assistant City Prosecutor Ferrer Co yesterday posted a cash bond of P20,000 on the two counts of libel his superior had filed against him.

Co last year sued Gonzalez for grave coercion and estafa. The case was dismissed, but the justice secretary used the "defamatory statements" in Co's complaint-affidavit as the basis for the case he filed against the prosecutor.

A panel found probable case to indict Co on two counts of libel, but dropped charges of perjury and incriminating an innocent person also filed by Gonzalez.

The prosecutor went to the sala of Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 26 where his request for the speedy disposition of his case was granted.

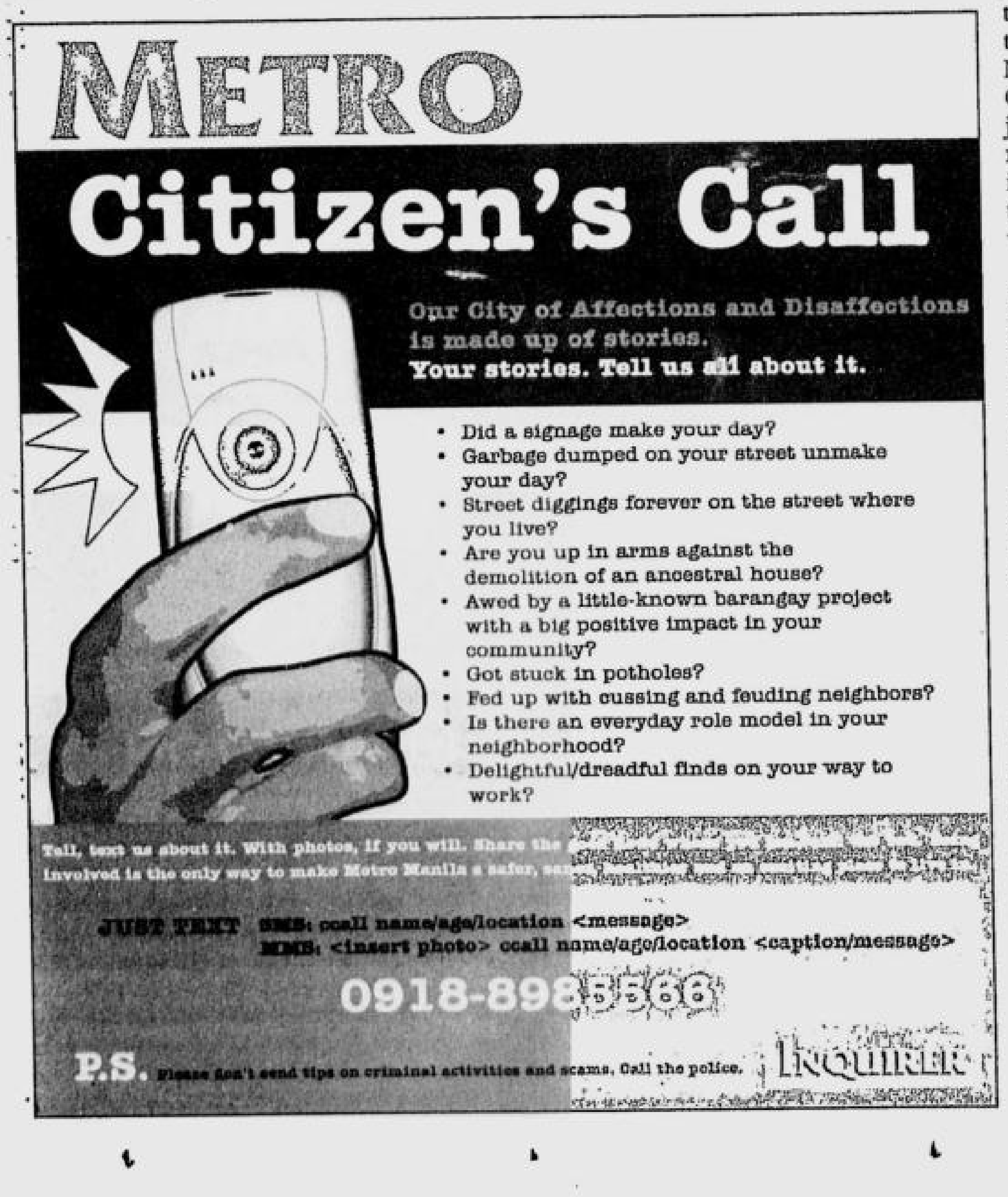
Co admitted that he and the justice secretary had disagreements about the National Prosecutors League of the Philippines which he said was a "private association" of active and retired prosecutors nationwide.

Co has been president of the NPLP since 1996. Gonzalez was the group's adviser. The NPLP has 1,400 active members and around 1,500 lifetime members.

"It all started in 2005," he said. "We were supposed to have a convention in General Santos City to elect our officers, but he (Gonzalez) canceled it. He had no business canceling because the NPLP is a private organization."

Though he remained NPLP president, Co said Gonzalez got mad after he said the justice secretary had deprived the group's members of the right to vote when he cancelled the convention.

Another convention was scheduled but Co said the justice secretary, after allowing NPLP members to attend the affair on official time, withdrew the privilege at the last minute. Only 100 members attended the affair, resulting in a lack of quorum, he added.



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INQUIRER

Arraignment of 4 suspects in shabu case set Sept. 4

By Kristine L. Alave

THE MURDER TRIAL OF ALleged drug lord Amin Imam Boratong, his wife Memie and their suspected henchmen is set to push through as Judge Nicanor Manalo Jr. of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court junked the justice department's motion to withdraw the murder information and the defense team's plea to recall the arrest warrants against the four.

In a three page order sent to the parties recently, Manalo, the presiding judge of Branch 161, rejected both motions and scheduled the arraignment of the Boratong couple, P02 Ramil Along and Nashir Labay on Sept. 4.

Manalo dismissed the prayer of the state prosecutor to withdraw the information on the murder charges against the Boratong couple and their alleged henchmen, saying it is the court's duty to assess the merits of the case through trial.

All four are facing trial for the alleged murder of German Colisao, an informant of a television network, who took footage of the Pasig City shabu market allegedly owned by the Boratong couple. The drug compound was demolished in February 2006.

Boratong, who had denied owning the shabu market, is detained at the National Bureau of Investigation. His wife, Along and Labay are at large.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez had ruled that there was insufficient evidence to pin the four for Colisao's death. Gonzalez also raised doubts on the credibility and testimony of primary witness Samer Palao and called for the withdrawal of the information filed against the suspects.

METROBRIEFS

Birthday gift for Peewee

IN CELEBRATION of the birthday of Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad, the Pasay City government will hold a job fair on Friday, Aug. 17, for residents. Public information officer Manny Aun said the job fair, dubbed "Serbisyong Alay sa Kaarawan," will be the city government's gift to the mayor who will turn 74 the following day, Aug. 18. The daylong job fair, organized by the Public Employment Service Office, will be held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Derham Park inside the Pasay City Sports Complex on F.B. Harrison Street. Aun added that around 50 companies, including Shoemart, IBM, Watson's, Cinderella and Rustans, will participate in the fair, along with overseas companies Neostar, Prime Star, Trans Overseas, Care Plus and Lead Resources. Applicants should come in business attire and bring a copy of their resume, barangay clearance and community tax certificate. Residents who want to apply for a National Bureau of Investigation clearance can also do so at the "One Stop Shop Lingkod Bayan" center to be set up at the sports complex. Applicants should bring two valid IDs, their old clearance and P115 for the application fee.

Julie M. Aurelio

Metro waterworld: Massive flooding …

From page A17

Ma. Orosa Streets in Ermita.

Ironically, traffic was normal in the low-lying Camanava (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela) area.

According to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the sheer volume of yesterday's rainfall led to the massive flooding in several parts of the metropolis.

"There was really too much rainwater, so we got more incidents of flooding than usual," said Metrobase director Bobby Aguilar.

"Our people were there in the streets. They were all on orders to stay in their posts," he said when asked about the seeming absence of MMDA personnel during the downpour. "There just wasn't much that they could do."

The MMDA official said the major thoroughfares hardest hit by flooding were Gil Puyat Avenue (Buendia), South Superhighway, Roxas Boulevard, Edsa Santolan, Main Avenue and Shaw Boulevard.

For MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, however, yesterday's flooding was "just normal."

"I wouldn't say that the situation was that bad. It just so happened that garbage got stuck in minor drains and caused the floods," he said.

"We're actually improving in flood management. The flood water recedes just a few hours after the rains," Fernando added. *With reports from DJ Yap, Julie M. Aurelio, Jeannette I. Andrade, Margaux C. Ortiz, Kristine L. Alave, Tina G. Santos, Nancy C. Carvajal, Santiago R. Alcantara, Allison W. Lopez and Volt Conteras*

Rainstorms, floods devastate North Korea agriculture

SEOUL—FLOODS CAUSED BY rains have destroyed more than one-tenth of North Korea's farmland at the height of the impoverished country's growing season, official media reported on Wednesday.

"It is hard to expect a high-grain output owing to the uninterrupted rainstorms at the most important time for the growth of crops in the country," the North's official Korean Central News Agency said.

The damage has submerged, buried or washed away more than 11 percent of rice and corn fields in the country, KCNA reported, citing agriculture ministry official Ri Jae Hyon.

"The damage to farm crops by the current torrential rains is heavier than the previous ones in our country," Ri was quoted as saying.

The North is especially susceptible to bad weather because of a vicious circle where people strip hillsides of natural vegetation to create more arable land to grow food—increasing the risk of floods. The country has suffered from food shortages since the mid-1990s, due to natural disasters along with outdated farming methods and the loss of Pyongyang's Soviet benefactor.

Some 46,000 hectares of fields in South Phyongan and South Hwanghae provinces were decimated in storms that began on Aug. 7, KCNA said, noting those areas were the "main granaries of the country."

Another 37,000 ha were also destroyed in North Hwanghae province, the agency said.

The North's state media earlier said the summer storms that battered wide swaths of the country left "hundreds" dead or missing, and other aid officials have said the toll was at least 200.

To cope with the damage, the North has mobilized the military to help with recovery efforts, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported on Wednesday, citing unnamed South Korean government officials.

The UN World Food Program said on Wednesday that North Korean officials reported 200,000-300,000 people were now homeless, with the total number of those affected probably much larger.

Aid workers who visited areas just north of Pyongyang saw extensive erosion and flooding, WFP spokesperson Paul Risley said, adding the effects were expected to be especially acute because the weather hit during the pollination period for the crops.

"There is concern that this could indicate that these floods could significantly reduce the size of this year's harvest," Risley said from Bangkok.

Tensions over the North's nuclear weapons program have constrained feeding efforts as other countries were reluctant to donate aid to the country, although the situation has recently improved and North Korea shut off its sole operating nuclear reactor last month.

Risley said the WFP had planned to double by September the number of those it feeds to 1.9 million people—mostly children and nursing mothers—after a recent donation of $20 million worth of food from South Korea.

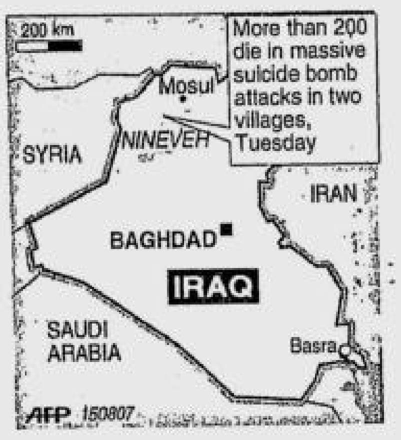
But because of the floods, that aid is expected to be diverted and the WFP will likely launch a new international appeal for assistance, Risley said.

The WFP is able to produce critical food items, such as biscuits from factories that it runs inside North Korea. However, it still needs outside commodities, like wheat and rice; to make them that are shipped via roads and rail.

"We're very concerned by the reports of damages to infrastructure, since that may affect our ability to quickly bring in emergency food rations," Risley said.

The KCNA report on Wednesday said "over 200 pumping stations, more than 1,600 sections of waterways and 30 reservoirs, 450 agricultural structures and at least 800 sections of river and stream banks were destroyed." AP

Truck bombs slaughter 200 Iraqis


200 km
More than 200 die in massive suicide bomb attacks in two villages, Tuesday
Mosul
NINEVEH
SYRIA
IRAN
BAGHDAD
IRAQ
SAUDI ARABIA
Basra
AFP 150807

MOSUL, IRAQ—MORE THAN 200 people were slaughtered when four suicide truck bombs targeted the ancient Yazidi religious sect in northern Iraq amid growing fears on Wednesday that more dead were trapped under the rubble.

In one of the bloodiest single incidents of the four-year war in Iraq, bombers late Tuesday detonated four explosive-laden trucks in two villages in the province of Nineveh inhabited by members of the Yazidi minority.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki blamed the "henious crime" on extremists and ordered a probe. "This crime will not stop us from facing the challenges and pursue the political process," he said in a statement.

President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, said the victims were "Kurdish Yazidis" who fell to a "genocide war launched by the terrorists and takfiris (extremists) against the Iraqi people."

The attacks in the villages of Al-Qataniyah and Al-Adnaniyah killed more than 200 people and wounded another 200, said Dakhil Qassim Hassun, mayor of the Sinjar municipality and Abdul Rahim al-Shammari, mayor of Al-Baaj municipality.

Officials said victims were ferried to hospitals across northern Iraq as local clinics struggled to deal with the overwhelming casualties, with rescuers continuing to search for survivors in the rubble of pancaked homes.

"The casualties are expected to rise as many victims are still trapped under the debris," Hassun told Agence France Presse.

Shammari said about 70 houses were razed by the bombings and police had imposed curfew in Sinjar and the nearby town of Tal Afar, itself no stranger to bloodshed.

"Scores of people are flocking to donate blood to save the wounded who are admitted in seven hospitals in Nineveh and Dohuk provinces," he said.

The White House condemned the bombings as "barbaric attacks on innocent civilians," and vowed to help Iraqi forces "beat back these vicious and heartless murderers," spokesperson Dana Perino said.

The US military gave a lower death toll of 60 but said five car bombs had exploded.

"Four vehicles were reported to have entered a crowded bus station and exploded as soon as they were inside of Khataniyah … killing approximately 30 people," it said.

It said another car bomb exploded in a residential area of Al-Jazeera, southwest of Qataniyah and killed another 30 people.

Yazidis, who are estimated to number several hundred thousand worldwide, speak a dialect of Kurdish but follow a pre-Islamic religion and have their own cultural traditions.

They believe in God the creator and respect the Biblical and Koranic prophets, especially Abraham, but their main focus of worship is Malak Taus, the chief of the archangels, often represented by a peacock.

Followers of other religions know this angel as Lucifer or Satan, leading to popular prejudice that the secretive Yazidis are devil-worshippers.

The community has attempted to remain aloof from the vicious sectarian and political conflicts gripping much of the rest of Iraq, but in recent months relations with nearby Sunni Muslim communities have worsened dramatically.

In Baghdad on Wednesday, police were investigating the kidnapping of the Deputy Oil Minister Abdel Jabar al-Wagga who was abducted on Tuesday by gunmen dressed as local security forces.

The gunmen stormed into a heavily guarded compound of the state oil marketing company and dragged Wagaa out at gunpoint with several others in broad daylight in the highest profile abduction in Iraq for months.

"It was a criminal gang; they have no political or sectarian motives," Oil Minister Hussein al-Shahristani told state television.

The latest bloodshed came as US and Iraqi forces are executing a massive nationwide crackdown to curb violence before Gen. David Petraeus, the head of coalition forces in Iraq, gives a crucial progress report on operations in early September. AFP

AT LEAST two people were killed and seven were wounded when a suicide car bomber attacked a judge's house in Hilla, 100 km south of Baghdad. The attack in Hilla, however, was overshadowed by the carnage in northern Iraq. REUTERS

WorldBriefs

India marks 60th year of independence

NEW DELHI—India celebrated the 60th anniversary of its independence from British rule on Wednesday in a triumphant mood, with many here feeling the country is finally taking its rightful place as a major global player. "I assure you that for each one of you, and for our country, the best is yet to come," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the nation in his traditional Independence Day speech. But with many of India's 1.1 billion people being left behind by the country's lightning economic growth, Singh warned: "we must not be overconfident." The fault lines that have so long divided India were also apparent on Wednesday with security tight across the country, especially in places where insurgencies are simmering, such as Kashmir, where mobile phone service was shut down in a bid to prevent the usual Independence Day violence. AP

Kenya journalists protest media bill

NAIROBI, KENYA—Hundreds of journalists wearing black gags marched silently through Kenya's capital on Wednesday to protest a proposed law that would allow courts to compel reporters to reveal their sources. Several radio stations also aired music or talk shows instead of morning news broadcasts as part of protests against the bill that an international media rights watchdog has described as "disastrous" for democracy. Mitch Odero, a journalist for 30 years in Kenya, said this was the media's first mass protest. AP

Polluted air bad for the heart

HONG KONG—Bad air can trigger in young, healthy adults a string of adverse biological changes that are linked to cardiovascular disease, a Taiwan study has shown. Writing in the second August issue of the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, the researchers described how they observed changes in 76 students living on campus at the Fu-Jen Catholic University in Taipei. "Urban air pollution is a cocktail of pollutants, when you breathe it gets into your body, through the nose, the respiratory tract, then the lungs," said professor Chang-Chuan Chan at National Taiwan University's College of Public Health. "The different air pollutants observed here can go into your lungs and invoke inflammation effect in days. They can also go directly, without causing inflammation and affect cardiovascular function, like heart rate variability." Reuters

'Duct Tape Bandit' gets stuck

ASHLAND, KENTUCKY—A man accused of being the "Duct Tape Bandit" has gotten into a sticky situation. The man, who had his head wrapped in duct tape to conceal his identity, walked into a liquor store on Friday, Ashland police said. Shamrock Liquors store manager Bill Steele had some duct tape of his own, but his was wrapped around a wooden club that sent the robber fleeing. Store employee Craig Miller said he chased the man to the parking lot, tackled him and held him in a choke hold until police arrived. A customer also helped. Kasey G. Kazee, 24, of Ashland, was charged with first-degree robbery. He pleaded not guilty on Monday and bond was set at $250,000. AP

6 Italians shot dead in German city

DUISBURG, GERMANY—Six Italian men were fatally shot in the head near a train station in the western German city of Duisburg early Wednesday, police said. The six victims were found in two vehicles near the main train station. AP

American teacher gives first lesson from space

WASHINGTON—THE FIRST teacher in space taught her first lesson in zero gravity on Tuesday, answering questions from school children in Idaho from the orbiting International Space Station hundreds of miles above Earth.

Barbara Morgan, flanked by crewmates Alvin Drew and Dave Williams, talked for 25 minutes to children at the Discovery Center in Boise, Idaho, the northwestern state where Morgan taught at a primary school early in her career.

"Astronauts and teachers actually do the same thing. We explore, we discover and we share," she told the class via videolink. "Those are absolutely wonderful jobs."

Morgan, now 55, trained as understudy to fellow teacher Christa McAuliffe in the 1980s as the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (Nasa) hoped that sending a teacher into space would fire the imaginations of millions and keep up support for its shuttle program.

But McAuliffe never made it to space. The Challenger shuttle exploded shortly after take-off in 1986, killing all seven people on board.

Twenty-two years later, Morgan has fulfilled the aim, riding aboard the shuttle Endeavour on a construction mission to the International Space Station (ISS).

In a session broadcast to Earth by the US space agency, she fielded questions such as how fast a baseball travels in space and how to drink in zero-gravity weightlessness.

She and her fellow astronauts demonstrated, throwing real balls and swallowing floating bubbles of liquid. Asked how astronauts exercise in space, Morgan grabbed one of her colleagues and lifted him.

Morgan returned to teaching after the Challenger disaster but in the 1990s started six years of training in the astronaut corps. She is the star of this year's second shuttle mission to the ISS. AFP

ENDEAVOR astronaut Barbara Morgan (center) is flanked by Tracy Caldwell and Commander Scott Kelly. AP

Japan premier expresses remorse over war

ABE: Avoiding controversial war shrine REUTERS

TOKYO—PRIME MINISTER Shinzo Abe expressed sympathy for victims of Japan's wartime aggression on Wednesday as the country commemorated the 62nd anniversary of its surrender in World War II.

But rightists criticized Abe for failing to pay his respects at the country's war shrine in Tokyo, which honors fallen soldiers.

Repeated visits to Yasukuni shrine by Abe's predecessor, Junichiro Koizumi, sparked anger in China and South Korea, who consider the shrine as a monument to Japan's past militarism because it includes executed war criminals among the war dead.

Abe has stayed away from the shrine since taking office in September in an attempt to appease Tokyo's neighbors. On Wednesday, only one Cabinet minister, Sanae Takaichi, made the trip to Yasukuni, along with at least 48 lawmakers.

"Japan caused great damage and pain to people in many countries, especially in Asia," the leader said at a secular ceremony in Tokyo. "With a strong sense of regret, I express my sympathy to these victims on behalf of the people of Japan," he said.

Emperor Akihito—whose father, Hirohito, once revered as god, issued the surrender decades ago—bowed deeply before a floral memorial to war victims and vowed never to repeat the tragedy.

"I mourn for those who perished in the war, and pray for world peace and for the future of Japan," Akihito said.

Abe, the hawkish grandson of a World War II Cabinet minister, is known for his reactionary views of history and rarely voices remorse over Japan's wartime actions. AP

Mattel recalls more toys in Asia over paint, magnets

SINGAPORE—US TOY GIANT Mattel Inc. on Wednesday said it was recalling some models of Polly Pocket, Batman, Barbie and other Chinese-made toys from Asian markets as part of a major worldwide exercise to remove the toys from shelves because of lead paint and tiny magnets that could be swallowed.

The global recall of more than 18 million toys, announced on Tuesday, came nearly two weeks after Mattel, the largest US toymaker, recalled 1.5 million Fisher-Price infant toys worldwide—also made in China—because of possible lead-paint hazards for children.

Mattel's worldwide recall involved 436,000 die cast "Sarge" cars related to the character from the movie "Cars" because they contained lead paint. It also extended a November 2006 recall of toys that contain magnets that can be swallowed by children; they included Polly Pocket dolls and Batman action figures. That recall now encompasses 18.2 million magnetic toys worldwide.

The "Sarge" cars were manufactured by Early Light, a Hong Kong-registered company that makes its toys in China. Early Light subcontracted the painting of the "Sarge" cars to another company.

While Mattel could not immediately provide a figure for the number of toys affected in Southeast Asia, it said that four models were being recalled in Singapore—Polly Pocket dolls, "Sarge" cars, a Batman toy and a Barbie and Tanner accessory.

Mattel said it was recalling three toy models in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, and one model each in Vietnam and Thailand.

Tuesday's recalls were the latest blows to the US toy industry, which relies on China for about 80 percent of toys sold domestically.

On Aug. 2, Mattel recalled about 1.5 million Chinese-made Fisher-Price toys—including characters such as Dora the Explorer, Big Bird and Elmo—that contained lead paint. In June, about 1.5 million Thomas & Friends wooden railway toys, imported from China and distributed by the RC2 Corp. were recalled because of lead paint. *AP*

China goods face tighter regulation

WASHINGTON—THE UPROAR ABOUT defective Chinese toys—following scares about unsafe tires, tainted pet food and other flawed goods—has sullied the "Made in China" label for many consumers and increased calls for greater regulation of Chinese exports.

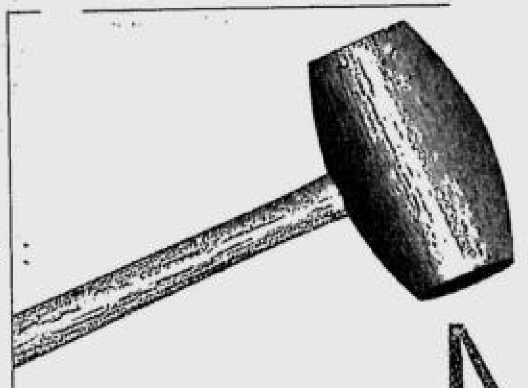
A top US senator on Tuesday called for the inspection of all Chinese toys imported into the United States, after toy giant Mattel recalled 18 million Chinese-made products worldwide.

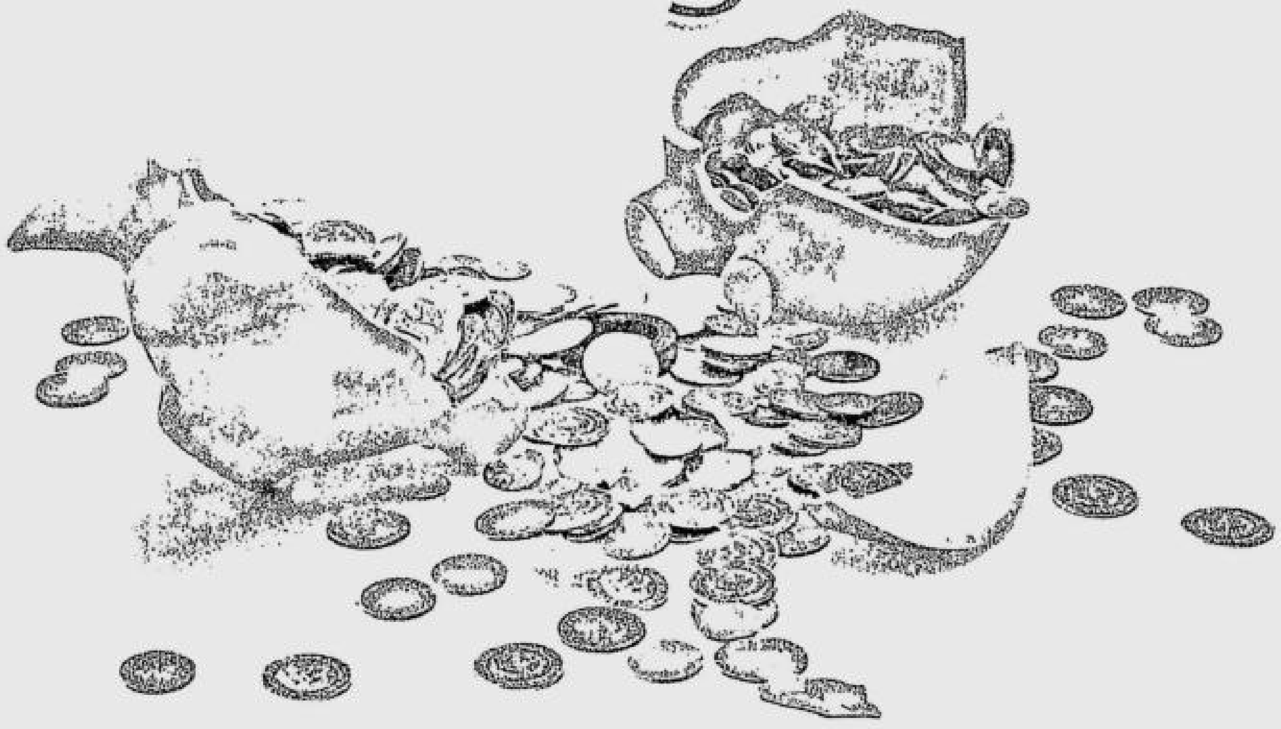
"We can't wait any longer for China to crack down on its lax safety standards. This needs to stop now before more children and more families are put at risk," Durbin said in a statement.

"This problem is serious, and I think that we should temporarily detain and inspect all shipments of children's products from China that contain paint," he said.

That call was echoed on Wednesday in the editorial pages of the New York Times.

"American businesses and the Bush administration must send a clear message to Beijing that it has to clean up its act or its export-led boom will falter," the newspaper wrote. *AFP*





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WHAT'S INSIDE

Pacquiao starts Cebu training /A22

SPORTS

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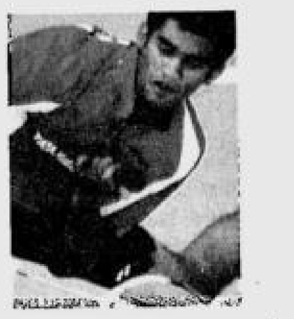
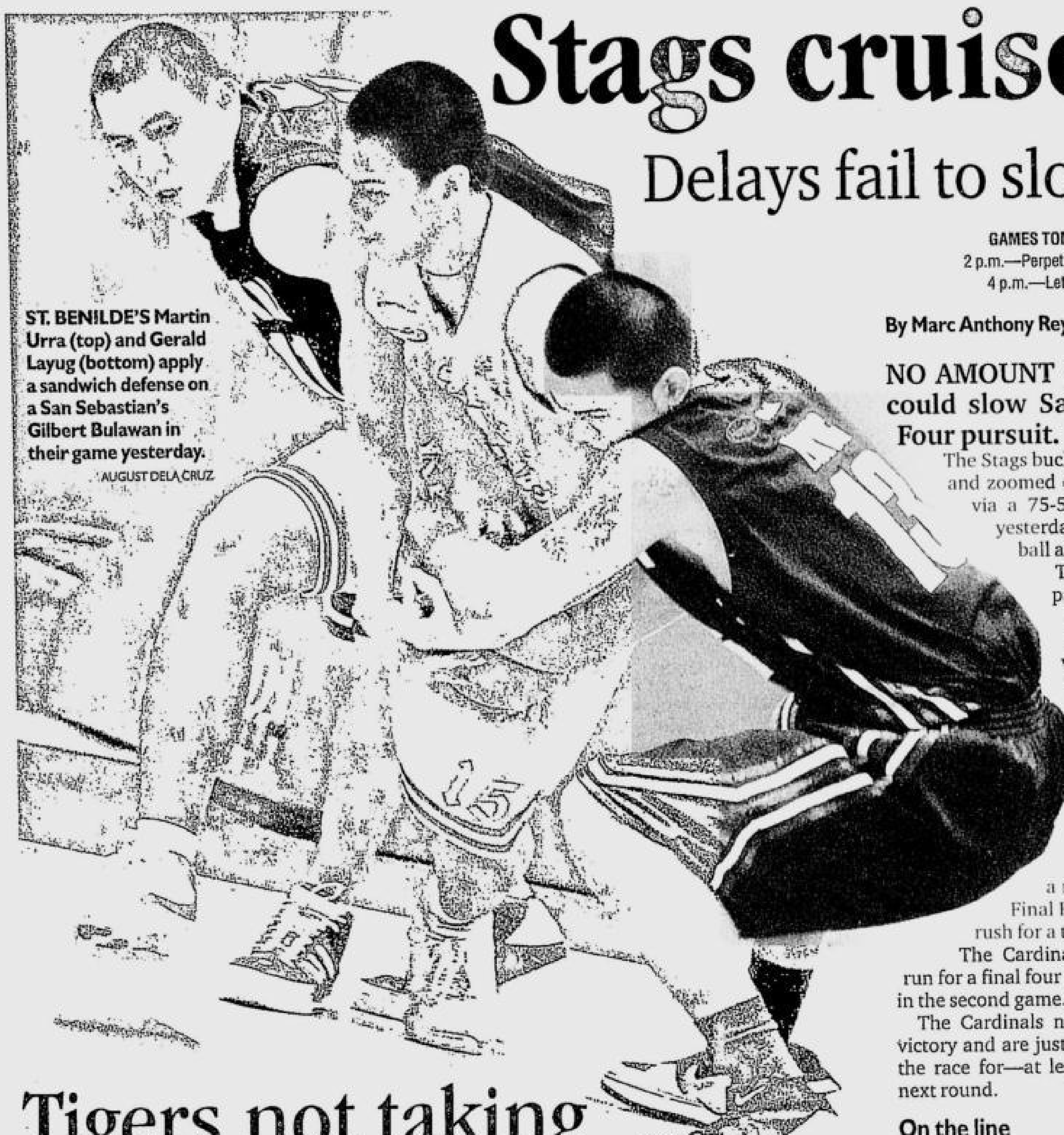
Hidayat exits in world meet /A23



Stags cruise past Blazers

Delays fail to slow SSC; Mapua stays alive



ST. BENILDE'S Martin Urra (top) and Gerald Layug (bottom) apply a sandwich defense on a San Sebastian's Gilbert Bulawan in their game yesterday. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

GAMES TOMORROW (*The Arena*)
2 p.m.—Perpetual vs San Sebastian (Srs)
4 p.m.—Letran vs Jose Rizal (Srs)

By Marc Anthony Reyes

NO AMOUNT OF STORM DELAYS could slow San Sebastian's Final Four pursuit.

The Stags bucked weather-wrought hassles and zoomed closer to the semifinal round via a 75-58 triumph over St. Benilde yesterday in the NCAA men's basketball at The Arena.

The Stags zigzagged their way past a heavy downpour, flooded streets and a near-impossible gridlock to get to the venue on time and then, once there, needed 50 more minutes of waiting period as the Blazers only had five players on deck at gametime.

With three more games coming up—against Perpetual, Letran and Jose Rizal—the Stags now have a realistic chance of making the Final Four, and join Mapua in a mad rush for a ticket to the playoffs.

The Cardinals continued their last-ditch run for a final four slot, beating Perpetual, 83-64, in the second game.

The Cardinals notched their third successive victory and are just a game ahead of the Stags in the race for—at least—the last two slots to the next round.

On the line

"At least we have a chance for the Final Four, right now our foot is on the line already," said San Sebastian coach Jorge Gallent, whose wards also snapped a three-game losing run in improving to a 4-5 record. St. Benilde slumped further to 1-9.

Game officials opted to wait till St. Benilde had a complete bench and started the game 50 minutes late. Officials refused to cancel the games despite an earlier announcement that classes on all levels were suspended due to typhoon Egay.

Goodwill

Surprisingly, the Stags were uncomplaining. But their act of goodwill almost backfired as the Blazers took control of the first half.

But Jim Viray came to the Stags' rescue, flinging a season-high six three-pointers en route to finishing with 23 points. The 6-foot-3 forward also got ample help from Gilbert Bulawan, who chipped in 12 points, and Jason Ballesteros, who had seven markers on top of 16 rebounds.

Meanwhile, at 2-7, prospects are dim for the Perpetual Help Altas who are now on a four-game losing run. They can win all their remaining games but their fate would depend heavily on the teams above them in the standings.

Sean Co, Kelvin dela Peña, Jerby Del Rosario, Jonathan Banal and Neil Pascual all turned in double-digit performances for the Cardinals who led from start to finish.

Michael Kong topscored for the Altas with 15 points and Rommel Balboa contributed 13 points and 10 rebounds. Point guard Ronald Reyes added seven points, 13 rebounds, four assists and three steals.

The scores:

First Game

SAN SEBASTIAN 75—Viray 23, Bulawan 12, Ballesteros 7, Raymundo 7, Najorda 7, Del Rio 6, De Leon 5, Zulueta 4, Aquino 4, Delgado 0, Saquillo 0.

ST. BENILDE 58—Robles 19, Johnston 10, Sevilla 9, Porras 6, Cabatu 5, Manlapaz 4, David 3, Montecastro 2, Layug 0, M. Urra 0, Cadiz 0.

Quarters: 13-15, 27-28, 51-44, 75-58

Second Game

MAPUA 83—Co 17, Dela Pena 16, J. Del Rosario 14, Banal 12, Pascual 10, Sumalinog 8, Acosta 6, Guillermo 0, Palomique 0, Mazo 0, A. Del Rosario 0.

PERPETUAL 64—Kong 15, Balboa 13, Ynion 10, Reyes 7, Lee 6, Galabin 6, Manuel 5, Liaz 2, Salanga 0, Febrian 0, Dysam 0.

Quarters: 20-18, 40-31, 65-48, 83-64

Tigers not taking Maroons lightly; rains halt games

PIDO JARENCIO, COACH OF THE defending champions UST Tigers, never underestimates any team in the UAAP men's basketball tournament. Not even the cellar-dwellers.

"*Walang mahina o malakas* (There are no weak or strong teams)," said Jarencio, whose Tigers are supposed to meet the winless University of the Philippines Maroons today at the Araneta Coliseum.

Inclement weather, brought about by Typhoon "Egay" yesterday forced league officials to move the UST-UP tussle and the accompanying La Salle-National University encounter to a yet to be determined date.

That the Maroons have lost their first eight games this season is not the reason for Jarencio's assessment. The reigning UAAP coach of the year is looking at things from a different angle.

"We haven't peaked yet," he said, implying that the Tigers can run into trouble anytime. "We have to keep on improving."

At least, Jarencio saw a glimmer of hope when the determined Tigers squeezed out an improbable 81-73 overtime victory over the La Salle Green Archers in their last outing.

La Salle coach Franz Pumaren, meanwhile, hopes to pick up lessons from that loss and put them to good use as the fight for Final Four slots tightens.

The Tigers exposed the Archers' complacency when the España-based crew rose from a 12-point deficit with less than two minutes left in regulation.

Rookie Khasim Mirza played hero for the Tigers anew by firing a triple in the key rally and shooting eight of his 16 points in the extra period.

The victory pushed the Tigers to second place at 5-3 (win-loss) in a tie with La Salle and FEU.

It has been an uphill battle for the rookie-laden Maroons this season. UP suffered yet another lopsided decision, 85-66, versus the Bulldogs last Saturday.

The Bulldogs claimed a share of fifth place at 4-4 with the slipping Ateneo Blue Eagles.

"This is the peak of our program from 2005," said veteran center Joseph Lingao-Lingao. "We have to be relentless offensively and defensively."

Jasmine W. Payo

STANDINGS	W	L
UE	8	0
UST	5	3
La Salle	5	3
FEU	5	3
Ateneo	4	4
NU	4	4
Adamson	1	7
UP	0	8

** Games scheduled today were moved to a later date to be announced soon*

Realtors cooking up draft day surprise

By Musong R. Castillo

LIKE THE TEAMS THAT OWN the first two picks before him, Sta. Lucia coach Boyet Fernandez has yet to make up his mind, although he sounded like he would pull out the first surprise on Draft Day.

"Of course, at this time, it's logical to say that we will be looking for a big man," Fernandez recently told the INQUIRER over the phone. "You'd need one to be a backup for Marlou (Aquino) and Dennis (Espino).

"But they are both playing well in practice and that has taken us to look at other players."

Fernandez said that he has a player in mind that he

REALTORS/ A22

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Foreigners strike; RP skaters unfazed

FOREIGN SKATERS FINALLY CARVED THEIR names on ice, racking up six gold medals to make a statement in day four of the 2007 Skate Asia at the SM Mall of Asia yesterday.

The country's local stars, however, remained unfazed and dominant as ever.

Festival Walk Glacier's (FWG) Wu Yik Lam of Hong Kong bested her heavily-favored Filipino rivals to capture the gold in the 4-5 female Stroking Delta then took the silver medal in the 4-6 female Surprising Delta.

Teammate Chan Cheuk Tung fashioned out a victory at the ice-fogged Olympic-sized skating rink to lead the foreign charge.

Earlier, the five-year old Wu notched two gold medals in the 4-5 mixed team ensembles and 4-5 female stroking and two silver medals in the 4-5 female Speed Racing and 4-5 female Solo Spotlight to emerge the top medal winner for FWG in this tournament sanctioned by the Ice Skating Institute of America.

"I'll just skate and continue to have fun," Wu, a pre-school pupil at the International School in Hong Kong, said through an interpreter.

Other foreigners who dished out impressive performances were Skyrink-Jakarta's Andika Fatharani of Indonesia in the 4-6 mixed Surprise Pre-Alpha, Fuji Ice Palace's Condrey Liu of Singapore in the 19-23 mixed Footwork 4, Husky Ice Palace's Sabrina Tso in the 9-11 female Footwork 4 and World Ice Arena's Bai Yurong of China in the 7 mixed surprise Freestyle 1.

However, the Filipino skaters, led by the talented contingent from SM Megamall skating rink, continued to dominate as they pocketed more than 22 gold medals, further underscoring their supremacy in the seven-day event.

Also shining in the day were SM Megamall's Gimelle Ballesteros (10-11 female Footwork 3) and Eri Reyes (12 female Footwork 4).

CLAUDINE Paguirigan shows off her three gold medals while young skaters await their turn to perform. ROGER MARGALLO

Pacquiao starts training

Roach hits Cebu today to ready Pacman for Barrera

CEBU—FILIPINO BOXING ICON Manny Pacquiao started his training here yesterday, confident that he still has enough time to prepare for and inflict a second defeat on rival Marco Antonio Barrera when they trade leathers on Oct. 6 in Las Vegas.

"He started training today," said Rex "Wakee" Salud, owner of the newly built gym where Pacquiao intends to put himself back into tiptop shape. "He looked good. He's in high spirits and seems focused on the task at hand."

Pacquiao started working out at 1 p.m. yesterday, doing some shadowboxing, pummeling the big bags and the speedball, jumping rope, and hitting the mitts. The session ended at around 4 p.m. with the reigning WBC super featherweight titlist sweating profusely.

"We're doing something about his training," assured Filipino trainer Buboy Fernandez, who came with Pacquiao to Cebu Tuesday night. "We know that Barrera is out to avenge his shameful defeat at the hands of Manny. We are taking him very seriously."

According to reports, Barrera has already been training earnestly in Mexico since being given the chance to get back at Pacquiao, who stopped him in the 11th round in their first showdown in 2003 in San Antonio, Texas.

IS MANNY Pacquia's Cebu training a test for Freddie Roach?

Pacquiao quickly left Los Angeles after a press conference last Friday, and in an interview with the media, stated that he is just trying to avoid possible Barrera spies who might be lurking at the Wild Card Gym.

Meanwhile, celebrated trainer Freddie Roach is set to arrive in Cebu today to supervise Pacquiao's preparations for Barrera. Roach is bringing along two Mexican sparmates for Pacquiao.

When asked about the "spies" angle, Roach told Maxboxing: "I don't think spies are going to help anyways. I don't think boxing's really into that, in the FBI business. I wonder if the spies are going to be in Manila?"

Roach also rationalized the change in plans, stating that Pacquiao had originally wanted to train in the Philippines for the first month and then return to Los Angeles to acclimatize and complete his training at the Wild Card Gym.

Roach said Pacquiao expects to spend a month in the Philippines before proceeding to Los Angeles late September and finally to Las Vegas before October.

"Usually, I can't control Manny, but now I can control him when I'm in front of him," the multi-titled trainer added. "If I'm not in front of him it's very difficult."

Roach admitted that Pacquiao has changed a little bit since he went away to train Oscar De La Hoya rather than Pacquiao in his last fight against Solis.

"Maybe he's testing me a little bit, said Roach. "See if I'll go to the Philippines with him. But I have no problems with the travel and the thing is as long as we start training right away when we get there, I'm happy."

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Gonzales challenges Peñalosa to rematch

STILL SMARTING FROM HIS SEVenth-round knockout loss to Gerry Peñalosa last week, Mexican Jhonny Gonzalez challenged the Filipino world champion to an immediate rematch to take place in October.

Oswaldo Kuchle, in an interview with Fightnews, revealed that they are currently negotiating with Golden Boy Promotions and they hope to close a contract at the soonest possible time.

'Jhonny doesn't have a scar on his face," Kuchle stated. "He made a mistake in not protecting himself, enabling Peñalosa to land that 'one in a million shot,'" he added.

Indeed, Gonzalez was ahead on two judges' scorecards—with one judge scoring it even—before Peñalosa landed a perfect left hook to the ribcage that left Gonzalez writhing in pain at a neutral corner.

Kuchle said he is talking with Televisa, Mexico's largest network, with plans of landing the fight in Mexico. After the rematch, Kuchle added, Gonzalez plans to campaign at the 122- or 126-pound division.

Gonzalez came into the fight a huge 4-1 favorite to dispose of Peñalosa, who has never lost a fight by knockout.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Realtors cooking up draft day surprise

From page A21

would want to tap as No. 3 overall, but declined to name him per advice of management.

"We'd like to keep it a secret for the time being," Fernandez said. "He may not be ranked that high (in the pre-Draft) and I think he will be a surprise."

The Realtors pick third after Welcoat and San Miguel Beer in the lottery scheduled Sunday at the Market! Market! in Taguig.

Sta. Lucia has not had much success of late even if they were able to snag last year's top choice and eventual Rookie of the Year in Kelly Williams.

Welcoat has been mum about its pick, leaving the first overall selection a wide open race among four players.

Samigue Eman, a 6-foot-8 find from Mindanao, Fil-American Joe Devance, former Ateneo ace JC Intal and former UAAP MVP Ken Bono are the names that have been mentioned by Welcoat coach Leo Austria.

Interim San Miguel coach Siot Tanquingcen also has his sights fixed on Eman, Devance, Intal and a longshot in Ryan Reyes, a crack PBL guard whom he watched during the rookie camp on Tuesday.

"I think our pick will come from those four players," Tanquingcen said.

Alaska, the reigning Fiesta Cup champ, has two picks in the Draft. But coach Tim Cone said that their pick, the sixth and seventh choices overall, would be highly dependent on who the teams before them choose.

"The pool may be deep, but our choice will depend on who is left there," Cone said. "But I'm pretty sure we can find an impact player in the choices that we have."

Meanwhile, Jojo Duncil led a slew of strong performances by PBA hopefuls yesterday during the PBA Rookie Camp at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center.

Duncil, the former top gun of current UAAP defending champion University of Santo Tomas, Jonas Villanueva, Dom Javier and Ardy Larong made a strong impression among coaches as they powered their respective teams to victory.

Duncil scored a game-high 16 points while Villanueva churned out 11 points and five assists to lead the Coke- Blue team to a 63-52 win over the Welcoat-Red squad.

Javier made 14 points, two rebounds, one assist and one steal while Larong came through with 12 points and six rebounds as Sta. Lucia-White team whipped Air 21-Yellow, 69-58.

MERDEKA REGATTA

Hobie Cats tack into the shifting winds in the recent Malaysia Merdeka Regatta held off the Taal Lake Yacht Club (TLYC) in Talisay, Batangas. The Philippine Sailing Association's Richly Magsanay and Ridgely "Allan" Balladares topped the regatta and earned the right to vie in Selangor Gapurna International Youth Championship on Aug. 22 in Malaysia. Other top finishers were the pairs of Eric Tomacruz and Dodi Poblete, second, and Peter Capotosto and Renie Ticzon, third. The competition was sponsored by the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board in celebration of the country's 50th Independence Day. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Superal claims Pilipinas Am ladies Class A crown

GEN. TRIAS, CAVITE—CRYSTAL SUPERAL held her ground against the rallying Bang Woo-ri to emerge champion in ladies Class A competition of the Pilipinas Amateur Golf Tour presented by Samsung at the Aoki course of the Eagle Ridge and Country Club here yesterday.

A member of the Philippine team that placed a best-ever second in the last Queen Sirikit Cup, Superal carded rounds of a three-under-par 69 and a 74 to pool a 143 and beat the South Korean by two shots for the title. RI shot a 73 and a 72, respectively, for a 145 total.

Another South Korean, Ara Chae, landed third at 152 following a 73 and a 79, besting second leg titlist Lucy Landicho, who fired rounds of 76, 78 for 154.

The ladies Class B plum went to Lyn Mangulabnan, who routed the field with a 172 aggregate following a closing 82. Counting her opening 90, Mangulabnan beat South Korean So Jung-hong by a whopping 10 shots. So shot a 92 and a 90, respectively.

South Korean Hyeon Jee-lee, however, asserted her supremacy in ladies Class A, prevailing over Thelma Rosario by an even more impressive 12 strokes. Hyeon tallied a 98 and 91 for 189 as against Rosario's 103 and 98 for 201.

Men's division action saw Rudy Villanueva nip Alberto Monreal for the Class C plum. Villanueva shot an 88 and an 86 for a 174 total, just a shot up on Monreal, who submitted a 175 built on an 89 and an 86.

The tour's major backers are Callaway, Mizuno, and Titleist-Footjoy by Dynamic Sports. Supporters include Custom Clubmakers, Gargol, Microtel, Lima City Hotel, Paramount Property, Hotel Koresco and Wave 89.1. For details, call 635-0010 or 631-5768.

Yu patriarch to Welcoat: Shape up

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

I'VE OFTEN heard Welcoat team owner Raymond Yu talk about his father Tony, to whom the Yu family turn for counsel regarding business matters .

I also found out that the Yu patriarch, who shares the same passion for basketball with his son, wife Margaret and Welcoat partner Terry Que, also calls the shots in matters concerning the sport.

"My father was very unhappy with the dismal performance of the team. He wants Terry and me to do something about it," Raymond confided.

The Dragons' last-place finish has caused much embarrassment to his father in the business community, according to Raymond.

"He is angry. He has directed us to take the necessary steps to make the team stronger, more competitive this season.

* * *

While it may not be realistic to aspire for a championship on its sophomore year, aspiring for at least a sixth or seventh place finish will be respectable, Raymond said.

The buildup starts on the August 19 amateur draft where Welcoat is the first to pick.

"We've narrowed our choice down to three: Fil-American Joe Devance, Samigue Eman and JC Intal."

While the premium is on height, Raymond said Welcoat is inclined to choose the 6'6 Devance who is a few inches shorter than Eman, who is 6'8, "because he has more moves."

The Dragons were scheduled to meet with the Welcoat owners last Tuesday night to evaluate their draft choices and map out their plans for the coming season.

If I heard it right, about half of the faces in the Welcoat lineup will be new this coming season.

* * *

Every time players are plucked out of their mother teams to be loaned out to the national squad, PBA gate receipts take a nosedive.

It happened in 1998 during the Bangkok Asian Games, and again in 2002 during the Busan Asian Games.

Surprisingly, it didn't happen this year, despite the fact that the PBA plunged into its longest preparation for an international meet.

On the contrary, the gate receipts during the 32nd season under the stewardship of chairn Ricky Vargas rose from a total revenue of P189 million last season to P209 million this season as projected, with net revenue climbing from P73 to P75 million.

Cash on hand as of July 31, is P64.9 million, up from last year's P62 million, reported Ricky who has been succeeded this week by Red Bull's Tony Chua.

More good news, according to Ricky. "The PBA has no overdue accounts, receivables have gone down and all teams have healthy equity. We have also paid the government 30 million in taxes plus cash dividends."

* * *

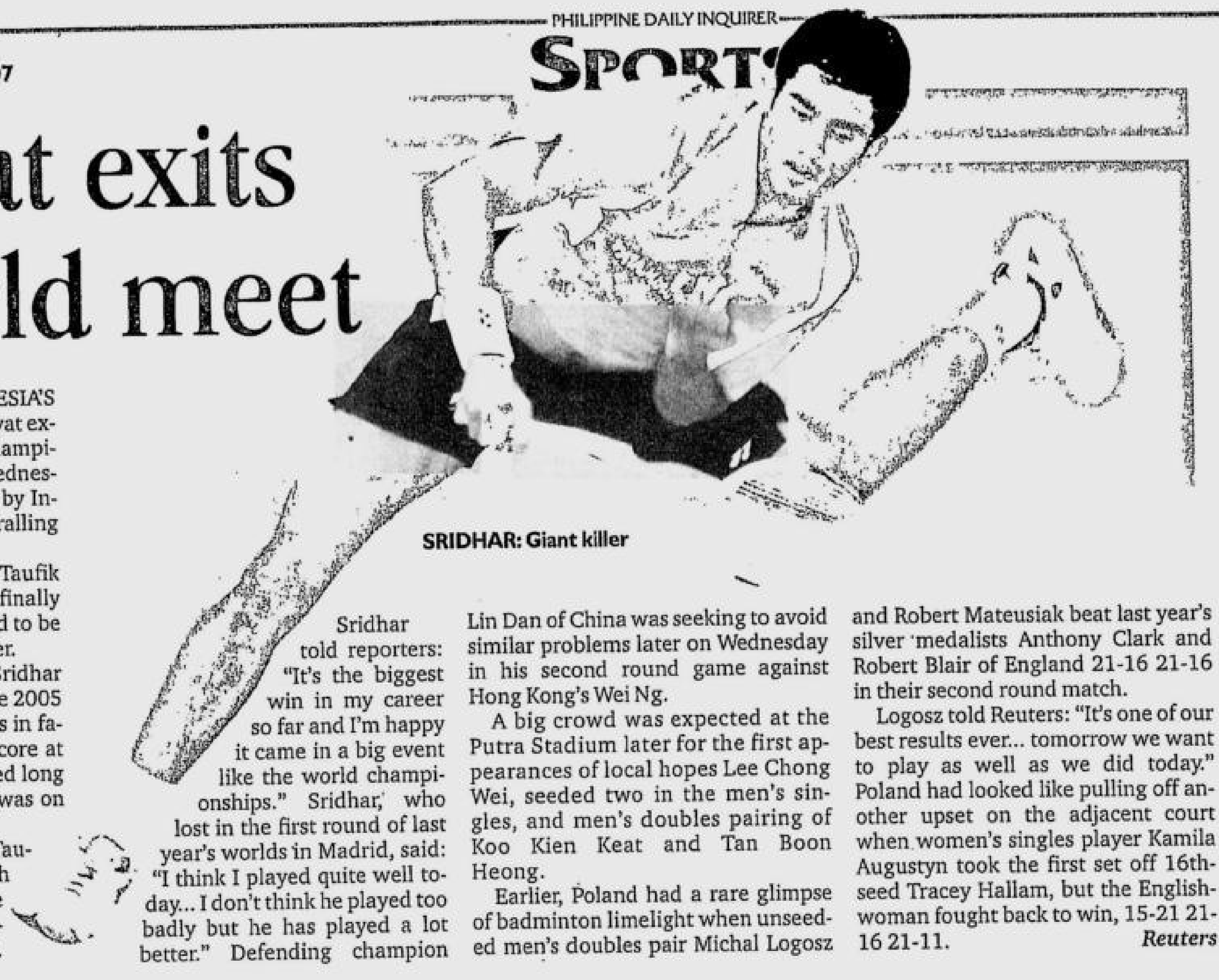
Because almost everyone at the PBA Press Corps Awards night noticed that Alvin Patrimonio was teary-eyed during the program, I decided to find out why.

"Why the tears?" everyone was asking everyone in hush tones, not only that night but up to the following day.

It didn't turn out to be a deep mystery. Alvin said he was touched by the tribute to the late PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino, where the old-timers among the members of the media where asked to say something about him.

Some of Jun B's closest friends like Moying Martelino and Sonny Barrios paid tribute to his memory too. Maybe Alvin should have been asked to speak as well.

Hidayat exits in world meet



SRIDHAR: Giant killer

KUALA LUMPUR—INDONESIA'S Olympic champion Taufik Hidayat exited the world badminton championships in dramatic style on Wednesday, beaten 21-14 24-26 22-20 by India's Anup Sridhar in an enthralling second round match.

After dropping the first set, Taufik needed six game points before finally clinching the second and looked to be in control at 18-13 in the decider.

However, the lanky, elegant Sridhar was not to be denied against the 2005 world champion. Two net cords in favor of the Indian leveled the score at 19-19 and when Taufik smashed long on the next point, the writing was on the wall.

Bravely, the eighth-seeded Taufik managed to save one match point but succumbed at the next to become the tournament's biggest casualty to date.

Sridhar told reporters: "It's the biggest win in my career so far and I'm happy it came in a big event like the world championships." Sridhar, who lost in the first round of last year's worlds in Madrid, said: "I think I played quite well today... I don't think he played too badly but he has played a lot better." Defending champion Lin Dan of China was seeking to avoid similar problems later on Wednesday in his second round game against Hong Kong's Wei Ng.

A big crowd was expected at the Putra Stadium later for the first appearances of local hopes Lee Chong Wei, seeded two in the men's singles, and men's doubles pairing of Koo Kien Keat and Tan Boon Heong.

Earlier, Poland had a rare glimpse of badminton limelight when unseeded men's doubles pair Michal Logosz and Robert Mateusiak beat last year's silver medalists Anthony Clark and Robert Blair of England 21-16 21-16 in their second round match.

Logosz told Reuters: "It's one of our best results ever... tomorrow we want to play as well as we did today." Poland had looked like pulling off another upset on the adjacent court when women's singles player Kamila Augustyn took the first set off 16th-seed Tracey Hallam, but the Englishwoman fought back to win, 15-21 21-16 21-11. *Reuters*

Dumaguete race draws 4,000 bets

AROUND 4,000 RUNNING ENTHUSIASTS are expected when the 31st National Milo Marathon visits Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental on Sunday.

The race events include the 21K qualifying race, 5K fun run and 3K for kids. Total cash prize at stake is P159,000 as well as trophies and medals to the top 10 finishers in each racing event.

The top three finishers in the men's and women's divisions of the 21K run will earn tickets to the 42K national finals slated on Nov. 18 in Metro Manila, where a cash purse of P75,000 awaits the king and queen of the annual Milo Marathon.

Also to be featured for this Sunday's festivities held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Adidas, Cebu Pacific and Department of Tourism is the cheerdance competition which has become one of the major attractions in the weekly event.

Local race organizer Jose Guirit has invited Gov. Emilio Macias II and Major Agustin R. Perdices to fire the starting gun at 6 a.m. and help hand the prizes to the winners after the race.

Last Sunday, a season record 20,153 runners participated in the Cebu City leg.

Milo AVP for Sports Pat Goc-ong is advising all runners to be at the starting area at least one hour before the start of the race for check-in and final briefing. Runners are also required to wear their official Milo marathon singlets and shirts for security purposes.

NBA GAME-FIXING

Ref plans to plead guilty

NEW YORK—FORMER NBA REFEREE Tim Donaghy planned to plead guilty in federal court on Wednesday to charges alleging he bet on games he officiated, a person familiar with the betting scandal probe said.

Donaghy was to surrender at Brooklyn federal court, the person said on condition of anonymity because charges had not been made public yet.

NBA spokesman Tim Frank told the AP that the league was informed Tuesday that Donaghy would plead Wednesday but was given no further information.

Donaghy's attorney, John Lauro, and federal prosecutors declined to comment. NBA commissioner David Stern said last month the referee's lawyer told the league his client was contemplating a plea.

Besides allegedly placing his own wagers, investigators also examined whether Donaghy provided inside information to others, including referees' schedules. The referee had a gambling problem and was approached by low-level mob associates through an acquaintance, a law enforcement official said.

The FBI first contacted the NBA on June 20 to talk about a referee alleged to be gambling on games, and the two sides met on June 21, NBA commissioner David Stern said last month. Donaghy resigned on July 9, though Stern said he would have fired him sooner but was told it might affect the investigation.

Stern blamed a "rogue, isolated criminal" for the betting scandal.

Donaghy was rated in the top tier of officials, Stern said, and there was nothing suspicious about the frequency of his foul calls. He was assigned to work in the second round of the playoffs, with his last NBA game coming during the Phoenix-San Antonio Western Conference semifinal.

No other NBA officials or players were expected to be involved in the scandal, which Stern called the "most serious situation and worst situation that I have ever experienced either as a fan of the NBA, a lawyer for the NBA or a commissioner of the NBA." *AP*

Smart/Petron jins join Asian Jr. tilt

TWELVE OF THE PHILIPPINES' FINEST young jins will banner the Smart/Petron taekwondo team competing in the 2007 Asian Junior Championships on Aug. 20-26 in Amman, Jordan.

Making up the team are:

Men—Sidney Darryl Capistrano, R-jay del Rosario, Nicole Mapilisan, Mark Reynold Dizon, Gerry del Rosario and Dennis Rocel Resabo.

Women—Jyra Marie Lizardo, Karla Jane Alava, Marifi Villeta Gadit, Emron Mac Golding, Kirstie Elaine Alora and Christine Rose Virtudazo.

Jesus Morales III heads the delegation while Victor Emmanuel Veneracion is the coach.

International referees Stephen Fernandez and Ceasar Mateo will also fly to Amman to officiate in the tough tourney.

According to Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado, the Philippines will be among 35 countries vying in the prestigious event. Other strong participants include Korea, Chinese Taipei, China, Japan and Iran.

Tiger designs 1st US course

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA—Tiger Woods will design his first US golf course at The Cliffs planned community in the western North Carolina mountains, the world's number one golfer announced here Tuesday.

Two days after winning his 13th major golf title at the PGA Championship, moving within five of matching the all-time record set by Jack Nicklaus, Woods announced the follow-up to his debut design effort at Dubai.

"My goal is to design a handful of very unique courses around the world and The Cliffs is a perfect fit for my first American design," Woods said. "Seeing what they've created with some of the world's best designers is very inspiring.

"I'm looking forward to adding my own style into the mix." Woods plans to take an active role in developing the master plan for the Cliffs.

"I loved the site and the spectacular 50-mile views of the Asheville area and the Blue Ridge Mountains," Woods said. "When I got to the top of the mountain and looked across those meadows I knew this would be the site of my first American design. I hope this will become one of the most talked about views in the country." Woods launched his design company's Dubai project nine months ago. That course is set to open in late 2009. *AFP*

SHARPSHOOTER
Marlon G. Valencia, a flight purser of the Philippine Airlines, shows his winning form in the United States Practical Shooting Association Golden Bullet Championship in Richmond, California. Valencia won the master and senior categories in the shootfest. Valencia is also invited to compete with the USPA Nationals, a gathering of the best American shooters, from Sept. 7-16 at Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Boys V-League finds a new home

THE PETRON TREATS BOYS V-League has found a new home in Colegio San Lorenzo Sports Complex on Congressional Avenue beginning Saturday. The opening ceremonies will start at 9 a.m. Playing are: Canossa Academy vs Batasan Hills at 10 a.m., San Lorenzo Ruiz vs Claret at 11 a.m., St. Joseph's College vs School of St. Anthony at 1 p.m. and UST vs Imus Institute at 2 p.m. On Aug. 19, De La Salle-Lipa will see action against Hope Christian School and UE at 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., respectively. Colegio San Agustin meets St. Francis of Assisi-Taguig at 4:30 p.m. in the last match of the league backed by Shakey's, Toby's Sports, Mikasa and Asics. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

CAGE OFFICIALS: Officials of RMF and Metro Basketball during the launching of the RMF Challenge Cup which starts on Sept. 4. From left Angelina Mendoza, Eric Ungson, Norhida Panggagam Edwin Rosas, MBT Commissioner Nilo C. Fernandez, Dave Colina, RMF CEO Cyrus Hao, Eric Magtabay, Harry Soriano, Dennis Abata and Jean dela Cruz.

Bustamante cops World Pool slot

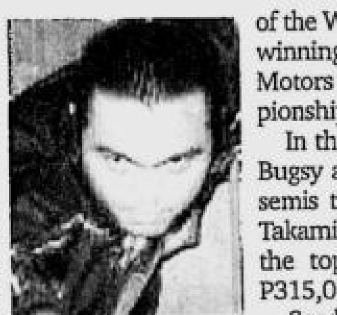
BUGSY PROMOTION'S JOVEN BUSTAMANTE beat Negros Billiard Stable's Godofredo Ducanes, 13-11, in their special 9-ball playoff for a World Pool Championships berth Saturday night at the Star Billiards Center in Quezon City.

The 28-year-old Joven, a distant relative of former world No. 1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante, will join other Filipino bets in the WPC set Nov. 3-11 at the Araneta Coliseum, according to Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines chair Yen Makabenta.

Aside from Makabenta, BSCP president Ernie Fajardo, BSCP treasurer and Brunswick Philippines distributor Sebastian Chua, Perry and Verna Mariano of Bugsy Promotion, NBS president Jonathan Sy and NBS coach/manager Christopher Palses witnessed the playoff.

The victory of Filipino Dennis Orcollo in the 2007 BCA Enjoypool.com in Las Vegas, Nevada, earned for him an outright berth to the WPC, opening up another slot for the Philippines.

Bustamante and Ducanes, being the seventh and eighth ranked players based on the BSCP standings, have to dispute the slot, according to World 9-ball organizer and Raya Sports president Makabenta.



BUSTAMANTE

Joven, the 2007 Fujairah World 8-ball semifinalist in the United Arab Emirates, needed two and half hours to thwart the 52-year-old Ducanes in their race-to-13, alternate break format.

"It is my dream to make it to the main draw of the WPC" said Joven, fresh from winning the 2007 4th Annual KIA Motors Korea International Championships in South Korea recently.

In that event, Joven beat fellow Bugsy ace Carlo Biado, 7-2, in the semis then subdued Japanese Go Takami, 7-3, in the finals to pocket the top prize of $7,000 (about P315,000).

Seeded Filipinos in the main draw of the WPC are reigning champ Ronato Alcano, 1999 Cardiff WPC ruler Efren "Bata" Reyes, 2004 Taiwan WPC winner Alex Pagulayan, Django Bustamante, Lee Vann Corteza, Marlon Manalo, Antonio Lining, Rodolfo Luat, Ramil Gallego and Jeffrey de Luna. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

SPORTSWATCH

CKP 168 completes 9-game sweep

CKP 168, POWERED BY PBL VETERAN PHILIP BUTEL, DOWNED WANGS-RTU, 77-70, to complete a 9-game sweep of the eliminations in the 2007 MBT-Danny Espiritu Cup held over the weekend at the RTU gym in Mandaluyong. Though assured of a semis berth, CKP 168 still played true to form to hand Wangs-RTU its third defeat.Wangs-RTU still made the semis with a 6-3 record. Also advancing to the semis were Rusty Lopez and Pacific Supertex.

2007 Milo Little Olympics-NCR Sept. 1-2

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND SPORTS EQUIPMENT WORTH OVER P400,000 are up for grabs when the 2007 Milo Little Olympics-National Capital Region kicks off on Sept. 1-2 and 8-9 at the Marikina Sports Park (MSP) in Marikina City.

Sy leads semis march of favorites

AKIO SY ROUTED ANTHONY REY LAPLAP, 6-2, 6-0, LAST SUNDAY TO LEAD the march of the top seeds to the semifinals of the premier boys' 18 years and under competitions of the Philta-Techno Lux Age-Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Joining the top-seeded Sy, who drew a first round bye, in the last 4 were Michael Tamayo, Juan Fidel Regis and Joey Koh. Tamayo blanked Raymarc Santiago, 6-0, 6-0, in the first round.

Guevarra rules SMB 9-Ball Open 2nd leg

GUEVARRA

BENJIE GUEVARRA DISPOSED OF veteran campaigner Godofredo Ducanes, 11-8, to emerge champion in the second leg of the SMB 9-Ball Open qualifying tournament held recently at the Bowling Inn on Taft Avenue, Manila.

Guevarra, a former snooker player, started slow, allowing Ducanes to take a 4-1 lead in the race-to-11, winner's-break event.

Guevarra then regained his bearing, tying the match four times—the last at 8-all—before sweeping the next three racks to seal the win.

On his way to the crown and the P42,000 top prize, Guevarra beat Florencio Banar, 11-6; Jech-Jech Limen 11-6; Jomar de Ocampo, 11-6; and Elmer Kalaquian, 11-6.

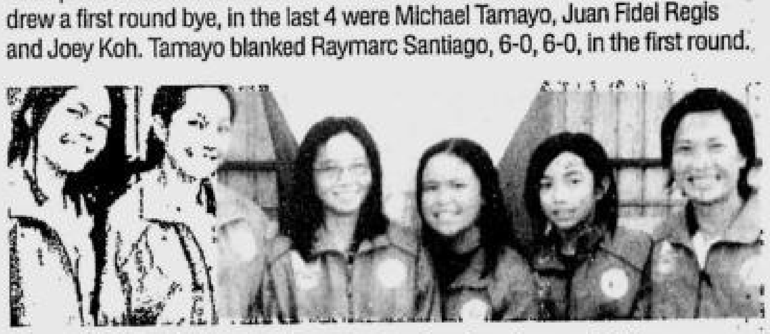
"I had a lackluster start," said Guevarra in Filipino.

Ricky Zerna bested John Rebong, 11-9, to bag the first leg and the P60,000 purse.

Meanwhile, the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) has announced the holding of the first ever Philippine Junior Pool Championship on Sept. 19-21 for male players aged 19 and below.

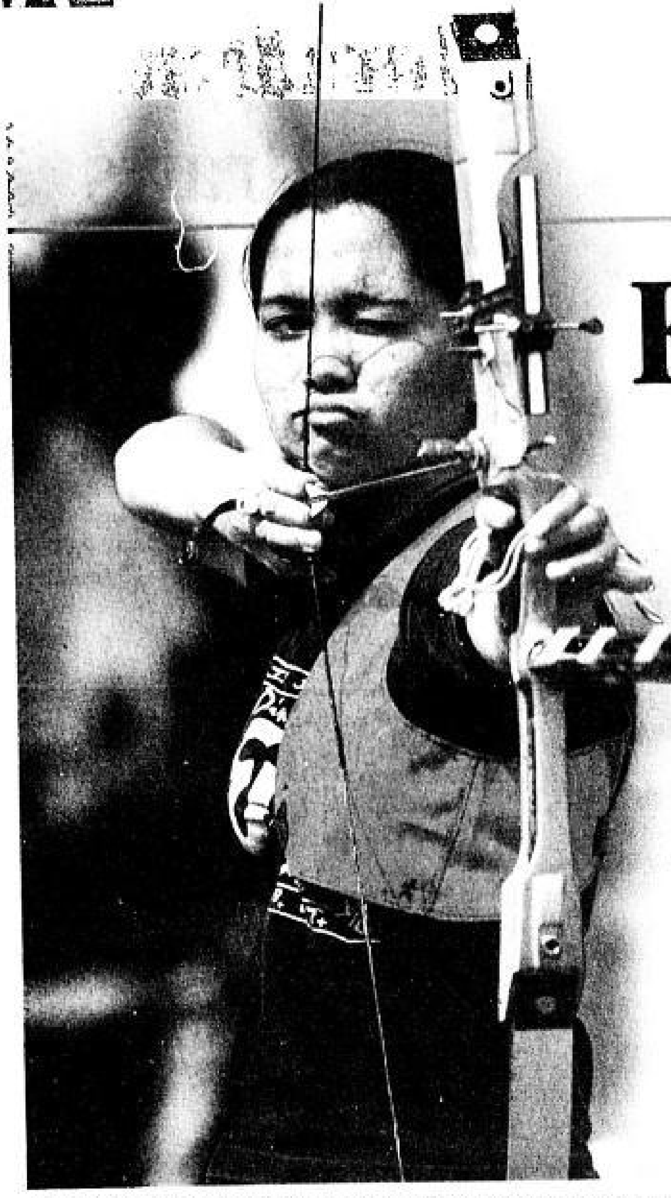
On Sept. 20-22, the BSCP will stage the 1st All Pinoy Scotch Doubles Championships at the Metro Walk Billiard Hall.

A Celebrity Mixed Doubles Tournament is likewise scheduled on Nov. 22-24 at the Elbow Room and Bugsy's Lair. For inquiries, call or text Jojo Santos at 0915-7008000, Gandy Valle at 0916-9589897 and Jharome Peña 0918-3942779. *Marlon Bernardino*



TEAM RP-MIRIAM COLLEGE: High school students of Miriam College see action for Team Philippines in the 7th Asean School Swimming Championships in Bangkok. Shown with Miriam sports coordinator Lissa Lesaca are (from left) Astrid Valesca Madrangca, Raiza Osi, Angelica Enrile-Inton, Anna Dantes and Judith San Juan.

SPORTS



FIRST GOLD: Roxanne Jane Loria is right on target. RAFFY LERMA

Koronadal archers hit mark

Cagayan de Oro paddlers, chessers strike in POF

By June Navarro

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Koronadal City seized the first gold medal here when its archers sparkled on the second day of competitions yesterday in the Mindanao qualifying leg of the Philippine Olympic Festival.

Roxanne Jane Loria compiled 262 points to clinch the gold in the girls' 50-meter recurve, triggering a medal sweep in the same category for Koronadal at the Don Gregorio Pelaez Sports Center.

Clarissa Malapascua pooled 187 points while Grace Layson accumulated 149 after six frames as Koronadal snared the silver and bronze medals as well.

Loria's total was built around cumulative scores of 44-86-137-186 after four sets of the 36-arrow event. By that time, the senior from Koronadal Comprehensive High School just coasted along and further stretched her lead for good in the final two frames.

"I'm happy about my performance," said the 15-year-old Loria in Filipino. "Hopefully, I can win more gold medals in the other events."

In table tennis, seven-year-old Sergio Benoya of Cagayan De Oro bested his elder brother, Sergio, in a marathon 11-8, 13-15, 9-11, 11-7, 11-8 triumph for a possible sibling rivalry in the finals of the under-14 category.

Sergio, the youngest participant in boys' table tennis, secured the top seed in the quarterfinals while his 10-year-old brother also barged into the round of eight.

Cagayan de Oro's Gloen Abales remained unbeaten in the girls' under-17 class after thumping early favorites Dorothy Anjanette Santos and Verlin Ann Lacastesantos of Zamboanga to lead the quarterfinal billing along with her fallen opponents.

Abales thrashed Lacastesantos, 11-9, 11-5, 11-8 before pulling off an 11-3, 6-11, 11-5, 11-4 triumph over Santos later in the morning at the SM events' center.

Over at the Leo's Restaurant in Kaugman, Cagayan de Oro and Misamis Oriental seemed ready to dominate every category in the chess competitions with victories in the boys and girls open sections, boys and girls under-20 and boys' under-14.

Jaime Frias of the host city downed teammate Simplicio Santiago to join Jeriel Manlimbana of Malaybalay, Bukidnon, Zamboanga's Prince Ralph Pidor, Jemuel Calo of Gingoog City and Elias Banguiran of General Santos at the top of the open class with two points each.

Loreshyl Cuizon halved the point with sister Cecilia to share the lead in the open section with Malaybalay's Genelyn Yanit, who earned 1.5 points after defeating Magdalina Rio. Other winners for Misamis Oriental were Antonio Chavez and Sitie Halia Sabo (under-20) and Julie Ann Opema (under-14).

Bacolod-Negros belles keep title hopes alive

THE PHILIPPINES' BACOLOD-NEGROS softball team put behind a frustrating week with a 6-2 victory over previously unbeaten US-West squad Westchester Del Ray LL of California Tuesday to keep its flickering title hopes alive in the Junior League World Series in Kirkland, Washington.

Denied of what could have been an easy win over lightweight Europe because they failed to arrive in Kirkland on time, the Bacolod girls, the Asia-Pacific representatives, had their backs against the wall in just the third day of the 10-team tournament.

But standout pitcher Analie Benjamin , cousin Angelique Benjamin and outfielders Charmaine Joy Oria and Cherry Ann Basco wielded hot bats to resuscitate the Bacolod softbelles' bid.

The Benjamin cousins combined for 4-for-6, including two doubles, and had two runs batted in, while Basco belted two hits, including a double, the same output churned in by Oria.

The victory shoved the Filipinos—who had to forfeit their opening-day match against a Dutch team because it was unable to book an earlier flight from Manila—into a tie with US-Central squad Boardman, Ohio at 1-1.

US-East's Harvestraw LL from New York leads the group with a 2-0 record, followed by US-West, which handily beat the Dutch squad, 17-2, Monday, at 2-1.

The Bacolod girls, losing finalists to US South last year, meet the Harvestraw softbelles at 2 p.m. Wednesday (5 a.m. Thursday in the Philippines), before clashing with Boardman at 11:45 a.m. Thursday (2:45 a.m. Friday in the Philippines).

In the Big League competition in Kalamazoo, Michigan, the Illam squad was stopped in its tracks by California, 3-2, to fall to third place in Pool A with a 1-1 slate.

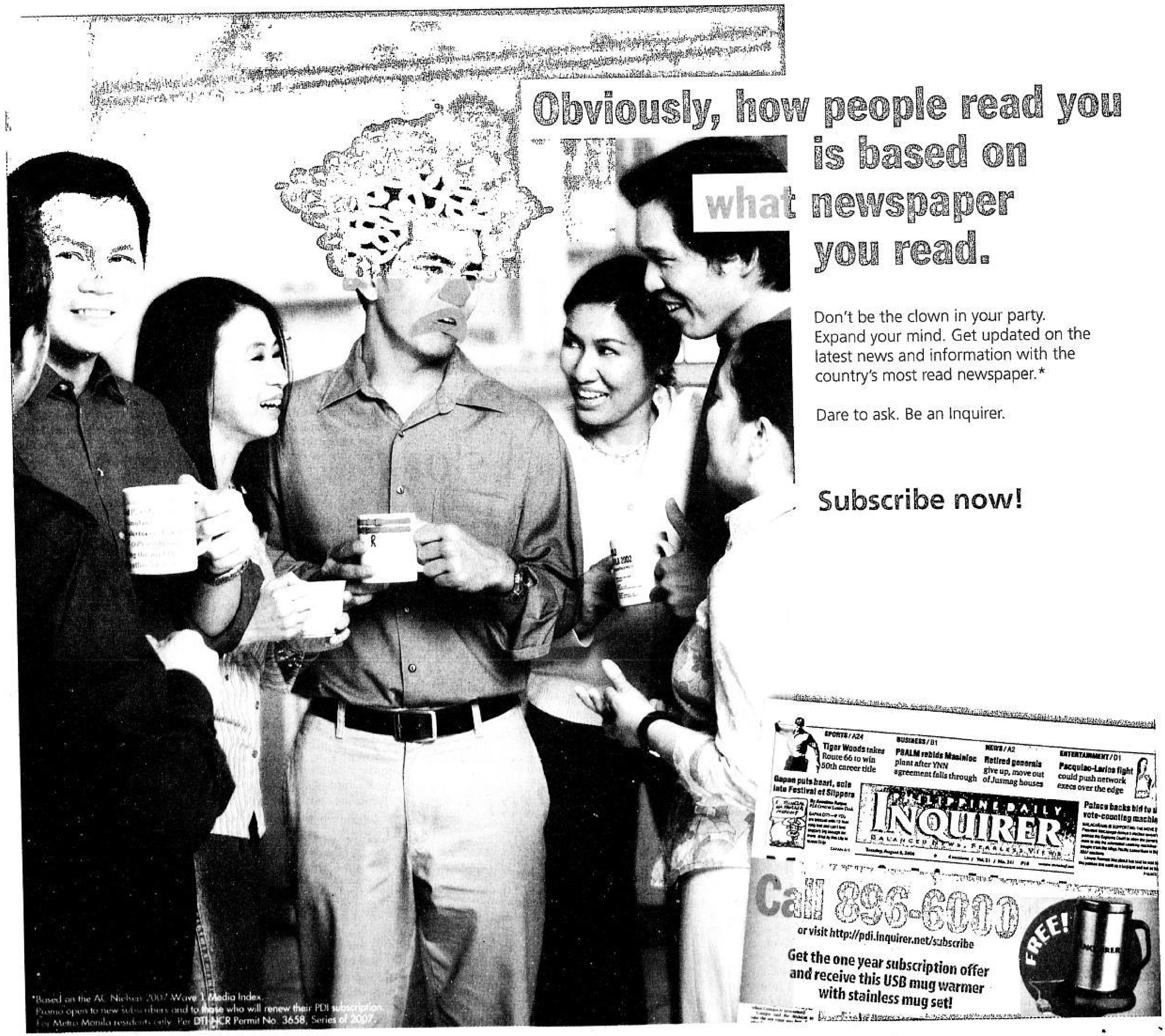
The Manila clouters, 5-4 winners over US-South's West Virgina Monday, face a must-win scenario when they collide with Pool A leader District II (3-0) late Wednesday.

In Taylor, Michigan, Illam Central from Makati guns for its third win in the Junior League Baseball World Series against Elrod Hedricks West LL from the Virgin Islands early today.

The Filipino squad, powered by pitcher Yusuke Kuroda, Andrew Tan and Miko Habana, can secure its place in the semifinals with a win today, after victories over Canada (6-3) and Puerto Rico (6-0).

Cedelf P. Tupas, Inquirer Visayas

ANALIE Benjamin.



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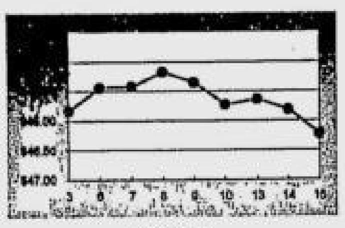

AUGUST

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱46.23 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Aug. 15, 2007

Jittery investors dump investments in emerging markets

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson and Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO WEAKENED BACK TO THE 46-TO-$1 TERRITOry and stocks fell 4.1 percent yesterday as markets around the world plunged on continued worries about problems in US credit markets and a projected slowdown in consumer spending, dealers said.

The stock market slumped to its lowest in nearly five months and staged its fourth biggest one-day point drop this year, triggered by a sharp selloff on Wall Street and other Asian markets on fears of slowing consumer spending in the United States.

The Philippine Stock Exchange Index (PSEi) fell for the fourth straight day by 133.22 points or 4.08 percent to 3,130,34. This was the lowest close since March 21 when it stood at 3,090.47.

The PSE said that this was the market's third biggest one-day percentage drop this year. Year-to-date, the market was still up 4.96 percent or 147.8 points.

"This is really a nervous reaction to the Dow Jones' 207-point decline (overnight). The market is ignoring fundamentals for the time being. In such a scenario, the correction could end up erasing the market's year-to-date gains before any consolidation takes place," said Francisco Liboro, president at PCCI Securities.

Analysts said investors had been shaken again when Wall Street plunged for a fourth consecutive session on problems in the US subprime mortgage market and on disappointing forecasts by major US retailers Home Depot and Wal-Mart.

"Home Depot and Wal-Mart forecasts are bearish. This is a reflection of weakening consumer confidence and is partly due to the drop in US stocks and continued worries over the subprime sector," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

Value turnover hit P4.04 billion with more than 2.6 billion shares traded. Losers pummeled gainers, 131 to 6.

"Based on technical analysis, the support is 3,100. We are testing that support and once we break that, we are in a bear market. The bull run is over," warned Vistan.

"The market moved as a crowd. It threw away all fundamentals, dis-

STOCKS/ B5

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OFW remittances up 18% in first half to $7B

MONEY SENT HOME BY OVERSEAS Filipino workers through the banking system rose by only 1 percent in June over a year ago but remained above the $1-billion mark for the 14th straight month despite a decline in the deployment of new workers abroad.

But for the first half of 2007, total remittances coursed through banks reached $7 billion or 18.1 percent better than the year-ago level despite a 5.1-percent decline in the number of new workers hired abroad, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

The high level of remittances despite the slowdown in OFW deployment during the first six months was attributed by BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. to Philippine banks' initiatives to provide more efficient remittance transfer services and expand the number of remittance centers abroad.

"As a result, the access of OFWs and their beneficiaries to the various financial services offered by banks has expanded, therefore encouraging their use of the banking system as the conduit for their remittance transactions as well as for their savings and investment activities," Tetangco said in a statement.

An earlier study on the Mexican experience showed that remittances held as deposits in the banking system were two to three times more beneficial than those coursed elsewhere as these flows could be channeled to investments, including small and micro-businesses.

The BSP's monthly report on OFW inflows did not include funds flowing through the informal channels, defined as unlicensed or unregulated operations such as friends, acquain-

OFW/ B5

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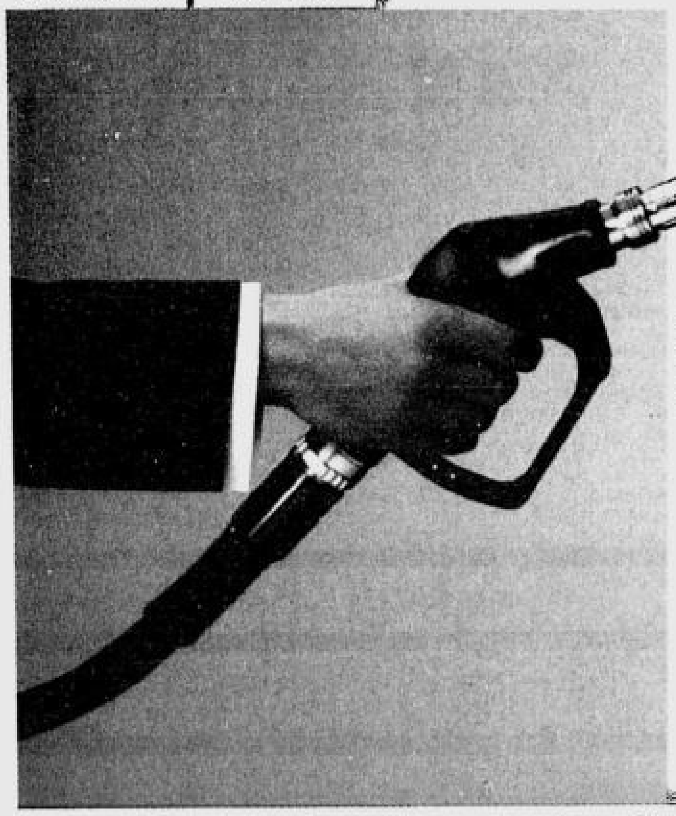

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Listed food, beverage firms turn in mixed results

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

Pancake, Tanduay profits rise as Ginebra's drop

FOOD AND BEVERAGE FIRMS REported mixed results in the first half, underscored by growing sales but offset by higher expenses.

Casual dining restaurant Pancake House Inc. reported its net income in the first six months surged 50 percent to P26.6 million from P17.7 million in the same period last year.

Profits were mostly from its core restaurant brand Pancake House, which posted a net income of P21 million, up 36.7 percent from P15.4 million a year ago.

This was followed by Japanese fast-food chain Teriyaki Boy, which almost doubled its net income to P8.8 million from P4.8 million in the same period last year.

Dencios' operations improved significantly from a net loss of P7.6 million (net of non-recurring income from franchise fees of P6 million) last year to P2.2 million in the first six months of 2007.

Year-to-date, Pancake's consolidated revenues increased 23.7 percent from P637.5 million last year to P788.8 million this year.

Meantime, Tanduay Holdings Inc. posted consolidated revenues of P4.96 billion in the six months to June, 62-percent higher than last year's P3.06 billion.

This was primarily due to the revenues derived from the sale of receivables and inventories of Unimark. In September 2006, the company acquired Unimark Investments Corp., a special purpose asset vehicle company with resources totaling P2.7 billion, consisting of receivables and real properties for sale.

Revenues from liquor operations amounted to P3.64 billion, 20-percent higher than last year's P3.03 billion. Total sales volume increased by 15 percent despite the increase in selling prices by 6 percent last October 2006.

Consolidated net income amounted to P289.84 million, up by 168 percent from last year's P107.98 million.

But Ginebra San Miguel Inc., the hard liquor arm of San Miguel Corp., reported a 30-percent drop in first-semester income to P231 million.

The company's efforts to revive its flagship brand resulted in overall sales volume growth of 6 percent above last year, lifting sales by 3 percent.

Despite encouraging first-half volumes, however, cost of sales increased by 8 percent to P4.94 billion from last year's P4.57 billion due to higher cost of raw materials and the absorption of an 8-percent increase in excise taxes. These narrowed down first-semester gross profit by 13 percent to P1.38 billion from last year's P1.58 billion.

PTT to invest in RP gas project

By Abigail L. Ho

PTT PHILIPPINES CORP., A WHOLLY owned unit of Thai government firm PTT Public Co. Ltd., has committed to invest in the local natural gas sector as part of its multibillion-peso, medium-term expansion program.

"We will take the lead of (Energy Secretary Angelo) Reyes and look at how we can participate in the development of this important sector of the oil industry," PTT Philippines president Siripong Phoungpaka said in a statement.

"We are hopeful that we can participate in the development and use of the Philippines' natural gas resources, which we know from our own experience will yield for the country considerable foreign exchange savings and cleaner energy," he added.

He said PTT Philippines was in a good position to delve into the country's natural gas sector as its parent firm was a leader in natural gas development, distribution and marketing and retailing in Southeast Asia.

The parent PTT also had extensive experience in developing, transporting and piping natural gas in Thailand, Myanmar and Malaysia, he said.

The Thai government-owned company operates some 4,000 kilometers of pipeline in an undersea, underground and overland transport network connecting 27 gas fields in the three countries, most of which are in offshore environments.

Thailand currently uses natural gas to run about half of its power plants, resulting in lower power rates and a more environment-

PTT/B5

Filinvest profit up 69%; Empire East nets ₱74.26M

FILINVEST LAND INC. POSTED a 69-percent growth in net earnings in the first half to P529.43 million from last year's P313.58 million.

Revenues surged 91 percent to P1.78 billion from P933.7 million a year ago due to higher real estate sales and rental income and equity in net earnings of its affiliate Filinvest Alabang Inc.

FLI owns 20 percent of FAI, which develops commercial buildings, residential condominiums and land. It also leases commercial real estate, and is involved in marketing and managing malls and theaters.

Rental income ballooned to P483.27 million in the first half from P8.98 million last year following the acquisition last September of the Festival Supermall and a 60-percent interest in Filinvest Asia Corp., which owns half of the PBCom Tower in Makati and Cyberzone Properties Inc., which operates the Northgate Cyberzone in Alabang, Muntinlupa.

Rental income also came from ready-built factories at the Filinvest Technology Park in Calamba, Laguna.

Real estate sales grew 16 percent in the first half due to intensive marketing initiatives, affordable financing packages, strong demand from overseas Filipino workers, attractive pricing and the overall positive market reception to FLI's housing models.

Another listed property firm, Empire East Land Holdings Inc., said its net income rose to P74.26 million in the first half from P68.3 million in the same period last year.

Empire East realized gross profits of P112.3 million for the first six months of 2007, compared with P146.6 million a year ago, due to the completion of certain projects.

Sales were derived from Laguna Bel-Air, California Garden Square in Mandaluyong, Xavier Hills in Quezon City, and The Cambridge Village in Cainta.

Empire East is 45.87-percent owned by Megaworld Corp. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

Ayala to prepay ₱7B in bonds

AYALA CORP. CONTINUES TO REFInance debts to take advantage of lower interest rates after announcing it will prepay P7 billion worth of bonds ahead of their maturity in October 2009.

In a disclosure, Ayala general counsel Renato Marzan said Ayala's board approved the early redemption of the bonds issued at a coupon rate of 12.677 percent a year. The bonds will be prepaid on Oct. 7 in cash at a redemption price set at 100 percent of the issue price plus accrued and unpaid interest.

The move to retire the P7 billion worth of bonds will generate roughly between P700 million and P800 million in savings due to lower financing costs over the remaining life of the securities.

Ayala has so far prepaid and refinanced P8 billion worth of debts since the start of the year, generating savings of about P500 million over the remaining life of these debts.

Proceeds from Ayala's value realization initiatives and healthy dividend flows from subsidiaries have placed the company's cash level at P20 billion by the end of the first half, giving the company flexibility to further reduce debt and financing expenses. Net debt as of the end of the first semester was at P13 billion.

The company has also shifted to peso debts from dollar-denominated obligations, with its debt mix now 81 percent in the local currency and 19 percent in dollars. This compares with the previous year's mix of 59 percent in peso debts and 31 percent in dollars.

"The group's financial position is at its strongest in the past decade and we are pursuing our efforts to expand the group's growth platform in new sectors. We continue to nurture our initial investments in the BPO space and continue to explore other industries that are beginning to open up and presenting opportunities for broader private sector participation," Ayala chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala had said in a statement. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

CURRENCIES

August 15, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.738552	1.000000	45.6960
Japan	Yen	0.006280	0.008503	0.3886
United Kingdom	Pound	1.475849	1.998300	91.3143
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094421	0.127846	5.8421
Switzerland	Franc	0.610122	0.826105	37.7497
Canada	Dollar	0.692112	0.937119	42.8226
Singapore	Dollar	0.483188	0.654236	29.8960
Australia	Dollar	0.618087	0.836890	38.2425
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.959129	2.652661	121.2160
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.196921	0.266631	12.1840
Brunei	Dollar	0.481612	0.652103	29.7985
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000079	0.000107	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.023521	0.031847	1.4553
UAE	Dirham	0.201087	0.272272	12.4417
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.354000	61.8724
Korea	Won	0.000792	0.001073	0.0490
China	Yuan**	0.097486	0.131996	6.0317
ArgentinaPeso	0.234908	0.318066	14.5343	
Brazil	Real	0.373213	0.505331	23.0916
Denmark	Kroner	0.134392	0.181967	8.3152
India	Rupee	0.018213	0.024661	1.1269
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212472	0.287687	13.1461
Mexico	New Peso	0.066595	0.090170	4.1204
New Zealand	Dollar	0.537520	0.727802	33.2576
Norway	Kroner	0.125457	0.169869	7.7623
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012226	0.016554	0.7565
South Africa	Rand	0.101123	0.136921	6.2567
Sweden	Kroner	0.107179	0.145121	6.6314
Syria	Pound	0.014411	0.019512	0.8916
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022403	0.030334	1.3861
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000344	0.000466	0.0213

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Aug. 14, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of Aug. 14, 2007

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of August 15, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
73	32	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	55	55.5	54.5	55	902,900
73.5	51.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	59.5	60	58.5	59	1,467,100
935	630	China Banking Corp.	830	830	810	810	8,370
40	19	Chinatrust (Phils.) Banking Corp.	30	30	30	30	1,100
22.25	18.5	Citystate Savings Bank	22.25	22.25	22.25	22.25	300
0.63	0.37	Export and Industry Bank Inc	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.4	11,750,000
75.5	36.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	54.5	55.5	52.5	53	3,405,900
65.5	32.5	Philippine National Bank	47.5	47.5	44	44	2,096,700
68	40	Philippine Savings Bank	62	63	62	63	3,800
39.57	14.35	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	26.5	26.5	24.5	25.5	1,991,200
90	47	Security Bank Corp.	75	75	70	73	188,400
66	41 54	Union Bank of the Philippines	53	53	51 5	52	97,600
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
1.98	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.7	1.8	1.66	1.74	14,052,000
16.25	1.82	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	10	10	9.5	10	556,800
1.6	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.9.	0.9	0.9	100,000
5	3.25	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.5	3.5	3.25	3.3	1,729,000
1,005.00	219	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc	750	750	735	740	1,720
2,250.00	1,900.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,100.00	2,100,00	2,080.00	2,080.00	600
1 94	1 3	iVantage Corp	1 36	1 4	1 36	1 4	40 000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	4.2	Aboitiz Power Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.35	4.35	26,975,000
0.57	0.23	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	20,000
70	42	First Gen Corp.	60.5	60.5	57.5	57.5	618,200
92	41	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	75.5	75.5	68	70	593,200
15	8.7	Manila Water Co. Inc.	14.25	14.25	13.5	13.5	4,784,800
116	15.5	Manila Electric Co. "A"	91	91	87	88.5	96,600
118	24.5	Manila Electric Co. "B"	90	90.5	87.5	88	2,755,800
7	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.2	6.2	6	6.1	71,972,000
6.5	3.75	Petron Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.2	5.5	5,836,000
14.75	7.5	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	8.5	8.5	7.9	8	449,000
1 9	0 92	Trans-Asia Oil & Energy Dev't Corp	1 12	1 2	1 12	1 2	4 000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	2.9	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	81,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.08	2.08	1.96	1.96	396,000
2.65	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	50,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24	24	24	24	3,200
61	31.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	52	52	51	51.5	1,145,100
1.96	0.77	RFM Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	508,000
4.05	2.1	Roxas Holdings	2.18	2.18	2.14	2.16	155,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. "A"	68	68	66	66	46,400
88	67	San Miguel Corp. "B"	68	68.5	68	68.5	69,400
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	16	16.5	16	16.5	1,540,400
0 55	0 2	Vitarich Corp	0 31	0 31	0 31	0 31	30 000
		CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	1.57	EEI Corp.	3.45	3.45	3.3	3.3	810,000
21.5	6	Federal Chemicals Inc.	12	12	11.75	11.75	318,000
9.2	4.5	Holcim Philippines Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.7	7,260,000
7	1.28	Republic Cement Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	20,000
2	0 27	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc	1 06	1 06	0 95	1 02	3 247 000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.1	Chemrez Technologies Inc	4 45	4 45	4 2	4 2	7,085,000
1 46	0 51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp	0 96	0 96	0 96	0 96	50 000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
7.4	5.1	Panasonic Manufacturing Phils. Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	1,000
0 75	0 0775	Picop Resources Inc	0 33	0 34	0 32	0 34	21 330 000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	1.8	A. Soriano Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.25	117,000
0.17	0.025	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.0875	0.0875	0.0825	0.085	26,700,000
1.28	0.21	APC Group Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.64	0.65	2,570,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.2	2.65	2.2	2.65	2,258,000
3.3	1.48	ATN Holdings Inc. "B"	2.6	2.75	2.5	2.75	427,000
0.018	0.007	Abacus Cons. Res. & Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	55,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. & Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	43,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	4,857,000
0.021	0.0075	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	97,300,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.15	4.25	6,547,000
1.38	0.49	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	860,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.82	1.84	2,397,000
8	0.8	Aries Prime Resources Inc	3.1	3.1	3	3	28,000
590	341.67	Ayala Corp.	450	450	415	432.5	698,130
14.5	7.04	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	43,700
5.8	1.06	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.35	19,956,000
10.25	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.2	765,000
6.9	0.97	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	26,000
8	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	14,000
14.5	5.6	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	9.5	9.7	9.4	9.5	690,000
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.68	1.5	1.52	1,487,000
11.5	0.32	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.7	4.75	4.1	4.4	1,352,000
8.2	2.7	PAL Holdings Inc.	5.2	5.2	4.8	5.2	290,000
0.75	0.17	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	190,000
452.5	202.36	SM Investments Corp.	350	350	332.5	332.5	356,900
2.2	0.71	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	650,000
0.73	0.125	Sinophil Corp.	0.3	0.31	0.29	0.31	20,960,000
1.6	0.85	South China Resources Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	50,000
23	1	TKC Steel Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	21,600
0 75	0 1	Wellex Industries Inc	0 33	0 34	0 32	0 34	9 820 000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	0.78	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.2	110,000
8.9	6.1	Anchor Land Holdings Inc	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	1,193,000
1.06	0.32	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	500,000
19.25	10.83	Ayala Land Inc.	14.25	14.25	14	14.25	9,678,200
1.88	0.99	Belle Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.18	1.18	597,000
4.7	2.14	Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.85	4	3.8	4	167,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.37	0.38	1,670,000
0.99	0.45	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.77	0.77	16,950,000
0.47	0.047	Ever Gotesco Resources & Hold'gs Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.205	0.215	32,740,000
1.48	0.4	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1	1.04	8,691,000
2.44	1.07	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.5	1.5	57,140,000
0.49	0.1	Gotesco Land Inc. "A"	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	140,000
0.5	0.0975	Gotesco Land Inc. "B"	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	100,000
2.9	0.84	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.78	170,000
1.12	0.24	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.59	0.59	1,710,000
4.4	1.39	Megaworld Corp.	3	3.1	3	3.1	47,276,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.5	130,000
0.7	0.125	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	5,340,000
0.87	0.38	Philippine Realty & Holdings Corp.	0.47	0.5	0.42	0.46	6,620,000
23	11.75	Robinson Land Corp.	16.75	16.75	15.25	16	8,449,500
5.9	1.37	SM Development Corp.	4.3	4.3	3.8	4	903,000
13.5	6.08	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.25	9.9	10	13,480,000
3.25	0.8	Shang Properties Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7	550,000
1.34	0.55	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	1,510,000
0.49	0.08	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.245	0.26	5,610,000
7 5	3 65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc	5 4	5 4	4 8	5 2	15 750 000
		MEDIA					
38.5	15.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	30	30.5	30	30.5	258,300
11.75	8.7	GMA Network Inc.	9.5	9.6	9.4	9.5	1,079,000
1 14	0 91	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp	0 95	0 95	0 95	0 95	60 000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.12	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.2	1.2	1,067,000
1,445.00	970	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,350.00	1,350.00	1,310.00	1,310.00	55,730
2,820.00	1,890.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,560.00	2,565.00	2,465.00	2,465.00	163,460
7 9	3 65	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6 2	6 2	6 1	6 2	3 636 000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.195	320,000
12	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	10	10	10	10	1,000
11.5	2	IPVG Corp.	8.5	8.5	8.2	8.5	1,058,000
0.065	0.0286	ISM Communications Corp.	0.031	0.032	0.031	0.032	25,500,000
29.5	6.5	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	15	15	15	15	2,000
2.9	1.8	Ionics Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	4,000
0.32	0.043	Island Information & Technology Inc.	0.175	0.195	0.175	0.195	76,270,000
2.08	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	320,000
0.0725	0.027	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.048	0.048	0.046	0.048	103,300,000
5 8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc	2 3	2 42	2 3	2 42	3 220 000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
34.5	14.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	28.5	29	28.5	29	1,780,500
2 04	0 99	Lorenzo Shipping Corp	1 16	1 16	1 16	1 16	25 000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.28	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.8	750,000
0 98	0 26	Premiere Entertainment Prod Inc	0 48	0 48	0 47	0 47	1 380 000
		EDUCATION					
3 7	2 65	iPeople Inc	2 65	2 85	2 65	2 85	2 000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
6	1.9	Macroasia Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.4	340,000
17.25	10	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	10.5	10.5	10	10.5	596,200
30	9 9	Paxys Inc	15	15	15	15	22 000
		MINING					
0.018	0.0075	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.0095	0.0095	419,000,000
7.6	4	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.3	130,000
7.7	4	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	25,000
21.25	7.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13.25	13.25	12.5	12.75	2,870,900
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	10.25	10.75	10	10.75	39,000
3.1	0.33	Geograce Resources Philippines Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.26	1.38	88,414,000
0.35	0.2	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	1,740,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	1,900,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.021	101,100,000
0.041	0.019	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	19,800,000
30	0.88	NiHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	10.25	10.25	9.3	10	949,500
0.021	0.0079	Omico Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	189,900,000
6.4	3.15	Philex Mining Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.1	5.3	7,681,000
43	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	30.5	30.5	28.5	28.5	126,200
1.36	0.39	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.88	890,000
1 8	0 53	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp	1 1	1 14	1 08	1 14	8 919 000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	1,370,000
0.025	0.0095	Oriental Pet. & Minerals Corp. "A"	0.018	0.018	0.017	0.018	209,100,000
0.027	0.01	Oriental Pet. & Minerals Corp. "B"	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	143,200,000
13.25	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	9.1	9.1	9	9	17,000
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.018	495,900,000

AVERAGES			VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	841.89 DOWN	26.25	38,393,490	532,154,200.00
Industrial	4,402.68 DOWN	192.00	158,250,100	1,167,731,175.00
Holding Firms	1,728.73 DOWN	91.70	299,409,730	612,443,460.00
Property	1,427.32 DOWN	61.22	237,276,700	771,821,730.00
Service	1,486.81 DOWN	63.54	221,210,190	624,939,180.00
Mining & Oil	5,209.68 DOWN	317.80	1,693,071,600	224,351,980.00
All Shares Index	2,007.85 DOWN	80.30		
PSEi	3,130.34 DOWN	133.22		
		GRAND TOTALS	2,647,611,810	3,953,441,725.00

COMPILED BY RHEA BLANCAS, INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

First Gen posts 74% profit growth, declares dividend

By Abigail L. Ho

FIRST GEN CORP. REGISTERED FIRST HALF profit of $72 million, up 74 percent from year-ago level.

In a statement, First Gen said the increase in its net income prompted its board to declare a P2.50 dividend per share, equivalent to some 50 percent of its 2006 recurring net income.

Payment date was set for Sept. 14 for stockholders on record as of Sept. 7.

First Gen's consolidated revenue from electricity sales rose 16 percent to $516 million, due mainly to the operation of the 112-megawatt (MW) Pantabangan-Masiway hydropower complex, as well as the higher dispatch of its gas-fired power plants: The 1,000-MW Sta. Rita and the 500-MW San Lorenzo plants in Batangas.

For the first semester, the Pantabangan-Masiway plants generated $17 million for First Gen. Its dispatch level was placed at 59 percent.

In the same period, the dispatch level at the Sta. Rita plant averaged 79 percent, slightly higher than last year's 75 percent.

The San Lorenzo plant showed a significant increase in dispatch level, reaching 92 percent in the January-June period from only 76 percent in the same period last year.

The dispatch levels of these gas-fired power plants were the highest in the Luzon grid during the period, First Gen vice chair and chief executive Peter Garrucho Jr. said.

The company's Bauang Private Power plant was also dispatched due to some supply constraints in the grid, he said.

The higher a plant's dispatch level, the more efficient it gets. This not only allows the owner to sell a higher volume of power generated by the plants, but also enables it to take advantage of economies of scale.

"The first half financial and operating results for 2007 have been exceptional. Not only was net income significantly higher than last year's, it also puts us ahead versus our budget," Garrucho said.

"Though the results have been strong, we realize that the jump in earnings was also helped by some nonrecurring gains of about $12 million," he added.

First Gen also pared down its consolidated liabilities by $92 million, despite a new $77-million borrowing from the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. last year for the acquisition of the Pantabangan-Masiway plants.

Sta. Rita prepaid $84 million worth of liabilities in February, aside from its scheduled payment of $96 million.

Maynilad signs deals with gov't, creditors

Firm eyes early exit from rehabilitation

By Amy R. Remo

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES INC. has signed agreements with its lenders and the government, paving the way for the water company's early exit from rehabilitation.

Last week, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, MWSS-Regulatory Office, Office of the Government Corporate Counsel and Maynilad's lenders signed a Prepayment and Settlement Agreement (PSA) and a Transitional and Clarificatory Agreement (TCA).

These agreements would also give Maynilad financial flexibility in implementing water supply improvement projects throughout the West Zone.

"We've been anticipating this day ever since. Maynilad can now move forward on a much faster pace," Maynilad president Rogelio Singson said.

With the PSA, Maynilad is set to settle its obligations with the MWSS and its foreign loans, a requirement for Maynilad's exit from a debt restructuring agreement.

Most of these loans have payment terms of up to 2013.

In the meantime, the TCA provides that Maynilad will comply with service targets set under the DCRA until enhanced service targets are submitted.

Completing Maynilad's rehabilitation exit plan is the submission of the agreement to the rehabilitation court.

The MWSS, Maynilad and its lenders have been negotiating for the company's early exit from rehabilitation since the entry of the DMCI-Metro Pacific Consortium into the west zone concessionaire last January.

Under the rehabilitation plan and the DCRA, Maynilad cannot implement much-needed projects to replace old pipes, reduce nonrevenue water and improve water supply throughout the West Zone due to the limit on its capital expenditure.

Opportunities for growth are also constrained since Maynilad cannot avail itself of credit facilities with lower interest rates and longer payment terms.

Also signing the MOAs were representatives from Bank of America Securities Ltd., Suez Environment, Goldman Sachs (Asia) Finance, The Asian Debit Fund Ltd., BNP Paribas, Deutsche Bank AG London, JP Morgan International Finance Ltd., East West Banking Corp., Merrill Lynch JPNDC Inc. and Phil. Investment One (SPV-AMC) Inc.

Maynilad has been under rehabilitation since it filed for concession termination in 2003 and after incurring heavy losses largely due to the 1998 Asian financial crisis. It was, however, able to recover in 2004.

The Maynilad concession was won by the DMCI-MPIC consortium in late 2006 in a bidding, which was also part of the rehabilitation plan.

Geograce, CDO OK deal

MINING FIRM GEograce Resources Philippines Inc. yesterday signed an Operating and Development Agreement with CDO International Metal Corp.

This allows Geograce to operate CDO's mining assets in Mindanao.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Geograce said the agreement included 19 blocks of CDO's mining property in Opol, Misamis Oriental and another four blocks in Manticao, Misamis Oriental.

The Opol blocks cover 1,539 hectares while the Manticao blocks involve 324 hectares.

Based in Agora Lapasan, Cagayan de Oro City, CDO is engaged in buying, collecting and exportation of ferrous and nonferrous scrap materials.

CDO may also engage in the exploration, development, extraction, removal, production, processing, buying and selling locally and/or exporting chrome ore, manganese ore, iron ore and other minerals and mineral products.

According to the disclosure, CDO entered into a memorandum of understanding with Minedomain Inc. in July this year.

The MOU granted Minedomain the right of first refusal to either acquire or operate the Opol and Manticao assets.

With the signing of the Operating and Development agreement, Minedomain has assigned all its rights in the Opol and Manticao blocks to Geograce, with the consent of CDO.

Geograce also has detailed exploration works ongoing in Zambales and Bukidnon, covering a total land area of 25,264 hectares with high prospects in nickel. The exploration works are in the intermediate and advanced stages. *Amy Remo*

RP seen leading property boom in Asia

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GLOBAL BOOM IN HOUSING prices has put the Philippines in the lead of an Asian rally as of the first quarter, according to a study made by online research firm Global Property Guide.

GPP's study considered property prices as end-March, covering 27 countries and territories, including nine in the Asia-Pacific region.

Research findings show that first-quarter nominal prices in the Philippines rose 14.29 percent compared to year-ago level, higher than 13.75 percent in Singapore.

South Korea, where prices jumped 11.64 percent, completes a troika of markets in the Asia-Pacific region that showed year-on-year improvement as well as two-digit growths.

Still, Singapore led the region in terms of real price improvements, registering an increase of 13.19 percent year-on-year.

Philippine prices went up 10.04 percent while those in South Korea jumped by 9.36 percent.

"The house price boom is now moving toward Asia-Pacific," the GPP study said. "Property prices in countries affected by the Asian crisis are showing strong signs of recovery, prompting fears that a property bubble is developing anew in the region."

GPP senior economist Prince Christian Cruz said the current economic and monetary conditions suggest continued strong demand for housing in countries affected by the crisis.

"All economies affected by the Asian crisis grew by (at least) 5 percent in 2006," Cruz said.

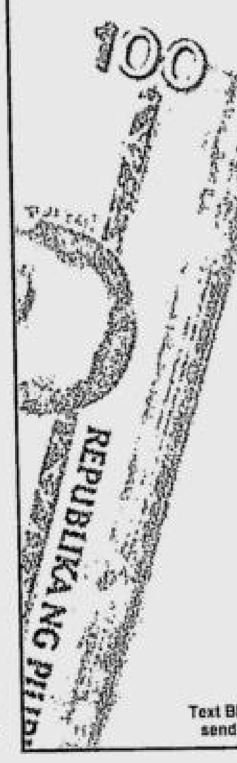
"GDP growth from 2002 to 2006 has been stronger than during the crisis period (1997 to 2001), although still slower compared to [the few years before the crisis set in]," he added.

Cruz said income per person in Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Korea and the Philippines were at an all time high. Here, the rate of increase was placed at 24 percent.

According to GPP, the Philippine real estate sector started its recovery in 2004, boosted by the business process outsourcing industry.

The firm added that with growing demand from overseas-based Filipinos, condominium projects were rising all over Manila and condominium prices and rents were going up.

Also, demand for office space for information and communications technology (ICT)-related firms such as call centers and other BPO operations sparked the revival of the sector.



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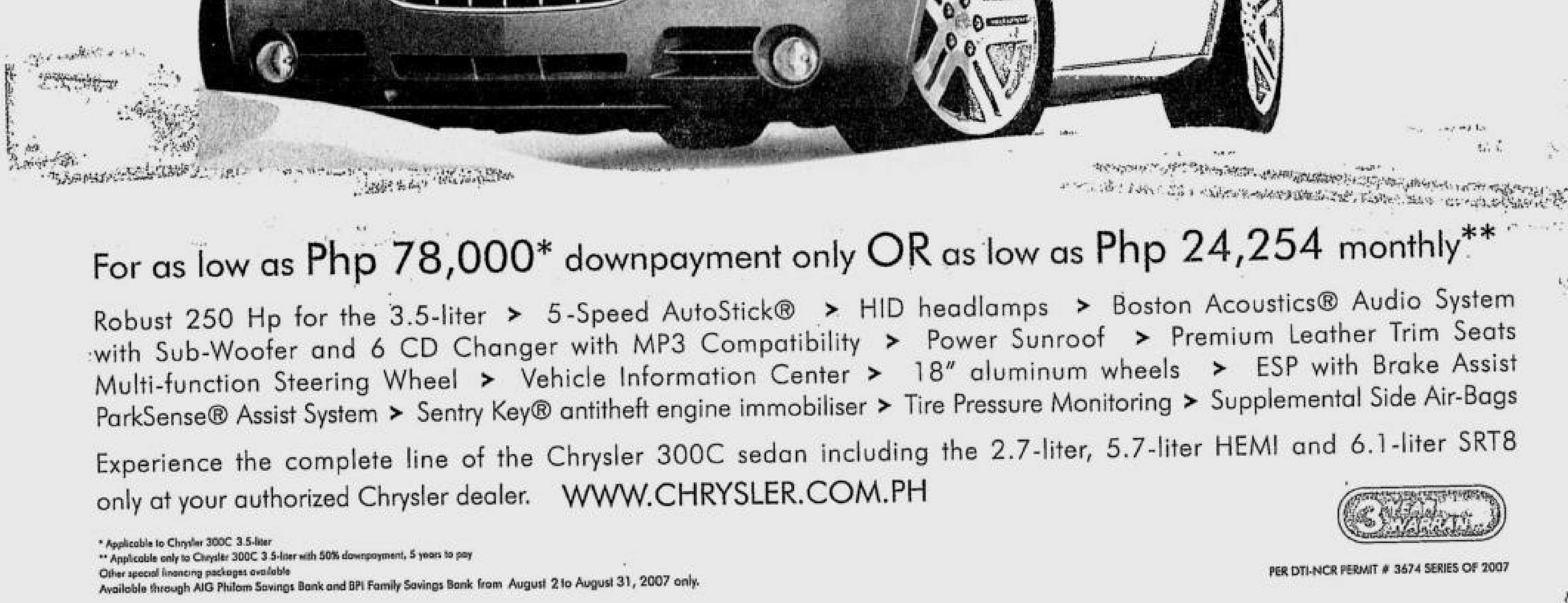

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RP bank lending grew 5.1% in June, says BSP

Growth indicates improving business confidence in country

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK LENDING managed to grow by 5.1 percent in June despite the increased availability of funds outside the banking system.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the outstanding loans of commercial banks, thrift banks and rural banks—including short-term placements with the BSP—amounted to P1.95 trillion as of June.

"Bank lending to all sectors of the economy, except manufacturing and mining, posted expansions during the period," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Lending to the financial institutions, real estate and business services (FIREBS) sector grew 6.5 percent in June from the same period last year.

Loans to the community, social and personal services, the wholesale and retail trade and construction sectors grew by 13.2 percent, 4.7 percent and 8.7 percent, respectively.

The agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector also increased their loan availment by 7.4 percent, while the transportation, storage and communication sector borrowed 12.3 percent more.

Loans to the utilities sector registered a modest growth of 1.6 percent.

Loans to the manufacturing sector, representing nearly a fifth of total loans, contracted by 5.9 percent, while loans to the mining and quarrying sector declined by 9.5 percent.

TETANGCO

On a month-on-month basis, lending adjusted for seasonal factors also grew 1 percent in June, reversing the 7.6 percent contraction in May.

Loan growth is a key gauge of business confidence and is thus considered a lead indicator of future economic growth.

Excluding banks' placements with the BSP, bank lending still grew by 4.7 percent in June.

Meanwhile, preliminary data indicated that non-bank sources of corporate funds have increased this year compared to the same period last year, pointing to firms' diversification of funding sources.

For instance, big firms raised over P40 billion through the public offering of shares in the first semester.

Others issued long-term peso bonds.

"The BSP continues to closely watch credit trends to ensure that developments in bank lending and other sources of financing are consistent with price stability and supportive of the liquidity demands of the economy," Tetangco said.

BSP DONATES 512 NEW COMPUTERS
Education Secretary Jesli Lapus (standing, right) and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr. (standing, left) watch school children from Dona Aurora Quezon Elementary School use some of the 512 brand new computers donated by the BSP to public elementary schools.

The computers were funded by the "Tulong Barya Para sa Eskwela," a joint program of the DepEd and the BSP.

LBP to issue $200M in bonds

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES plans to raise as much as $200 million from a foreign bond issue to boost its capital.

The bank will seek regulatory approval to offer a combination of hybrid or perpetual bonds that shall qualify as tier 1 or core capital and 10-year subordinated notes to boost its tier 2 or supplementary capital.

The bank will also sell P2.5 billion in peso-denominated tier 2 notes in the domestic market.

In a briefing Tuesday night, Landbank president Gilda Pico said that the proceeds of the bond offer will hike its capital adequacy ratio (CAR) to as much as 23 percent from 15 percent to comply with the stiffer global capital adequacy requirements under Basel 2.

Landbank vice president Alex Macapagal said the bank had recently invited over a dozen investment banks to submit proposals for the fundraising.

"We'd like to get the process going so that when the market is favorable, we can just go ahead and issue," Macapagal said.

He added that Landbank will not necessarily issue these hybrid and tier 2 notes in one tranche.

Once a proposed foreign borrowing is approved by the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board, the applicant is usually given 12 months to pursue the plan, he said.

Hybrid capital instruments have equity-like features that have made them acceptable as Tier 1 or core capital.

Meanwhile, Landbank also plans to sell at least P3 billion worth of real and other properties acquired using the Special Purpose Vehicle framework and a series of property auctions, to complement continuing efforts to reduce its bad assets and comply with the Basel 2 standards.

About P1.4 billion worth of property assets would be bid out using the SPV mode while another P1.6 billion shall be sold through auctions to be held across the country in September and November with the help of property consultant CB Richard Ellis.

"The proceeds of these sales will be used to meet the expanding demands for loans by our priority sectors, including the small farmers and fisherfolk, small and medium enterprises and microenterprises," Pico said.

Doris C. Dumlao

Holy smokes!

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

SOMEBODY MUST BE EXERTING awesome pressure on the DOF on behalf of BAT.

"DOF" is our very own Department of Finance, while "BAT" is the multinational cigarette company British American Tobacco.

Now BAT owns the "Pall Mall" brand of cigarettes.

Locally, however, the maker of the US cigarette brand is La Suerte Cigar and Cigarette Factory of the Cheng family.

BAT and La Suerte just introduced the "Pall Mall" cigarettes here in the Philippines, which may be good news to smokers, including minors who do not even have to produce IDs to buy cigarettes anywhere in this country.

For such a new brand, the law requires that the BIR should determine the excise tax.

Under the incorruptible but ousted BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag, the BIR set the excise tax on "Pall Mall" at P25 a pack.

Reason: "Pall Mall" is a new brand, it is a premium brand, and it is a foreign brand. Thus, under the law, it must be ... well, "unprotected."

When the present excise tax law was passed, the existing premium cigarette brands were slapped an excise tax of P10.25 a pack.

Under the law, new brands would be slapped P25 a pack.

According to BIR insiders, BAT and La Suerte paid for "Pall Mall" excise tax of P25 a pack when the brand was first introduced in the local market.

That, as I said, was the BIR position during the time of Buñag.

What do you know—the DOF just reversed the BIR decision, after BAT and La Suerte appealed the BIR ruling.

Meaning, actually, that BAT and La Suerte successfully reduced the excise tax on "Pall Mall" to P10.25 a pack. Wow!

And here is the funny part: Both the DOF and the BIR refuse to release copies of the new DOF ruling to anybody.

According to reports coming from abroad, BAT claimed in news articles that the DOF made the new ruling—the one reversing the BIR—back in mid-July.

Our info is that the BIR only received the new DOF ruling a few days ago—or last Aug. 9. Really wow!

Supposedly, the new DOF ruling came out of the pen of a DOF official who also had a close blood relative that got involved in the smuggling of power generators out of Subic free port.

Obviously, as I said, somebody powerful is lobbying for BAT. But who can it be?

He must be close enough to the DOF top guns to effect such a reversal of BIR ruling, even to the point of running against the law.

I mean, really really really close enough for the DOF top guns to risk catching the ire of the Lola at the Palace.

* * *

CLEARLY, THE professional basketball league PBA is big business.

And that is how the ousted PBA commissioner Emmanuel Eala treated the league during his tenure.

Okay, according to news reports, Eala resigned after the Supreme Court ruled to disbar him.

But let us not fool ourselves. The truth was that, while the PBA board grilled Eala for one whole day, making him explain the Supreme Court ruling, a group led by PLDT already plotted to fire him.

And on what grounds did they want Eala fired? Well, morality!

Nobody even remembered that, when Eala became the commissioner a few years ago, the PBA was in the "red," not to mention that it was also deep in debt.

The franchise holders—all those team owners with big businesses—actually had to infuse cash for the PBA operating capital every now and then.

But Eala single-handedly changed all that, introducing new ideas on how to market the league, personally soliciting sponsors.

Today, the PBA has some P70 million in ready cash!

Can you believe that? Gosh, the PBA for the first time ever even paid "dividends" to the team owners last year.

Moreover, the league still has millions of receivables from four franchise holders, namely, Sta. Lucia, Air 21, Red Bull, and Welcoat.

Now it seems "morality"—and not cash flow—is the biggest issue in the PBA. It's just a good thing that Eala turned the whole thing all around before the PBA board judged him as immoral.

* * *

THE WORLD'S "Turnaround Airline of the Year," our flag carrier Philippine Airlines, is moving out of its office in Makati.

Word is going around that PAL will lease two floors at the humongous PNB building at the reclaimed area on Roxas Blvd., which is actually so big that, at one point, the government wanted to move both chambers of Congress there.

Anyway, the office transfer is another interesting move for the airline that, only eight years ago, was in the throes of death.

For the sake of the action stars in the Senate, PAL fell into receivership about eight years ago, as many other international airlines all over the world went belly up.

In the past eight years, nevertheless, PAL consistently posted operating profits, and in the past years, it even recorded "net" profits.

That's why the Sydney-based Center for Asia Pacific Aviation gave PAL that "Turnaround Airline of the Year" award last year.

In 2005, the International Air Transport Association cited PAL as the sixth most profitable airline in the world.

And so why is it moving out of its prestigious Makati office?

Well, it seems that to PAL, it does not make a lot of business sense to hold office in a premium location like its Makati office. It is in the airline business, after all, and not real estate.

And so PAL is putting its property in Makati up for development in a joint venture with the real estate company in the Lucio Tan conglomerate—the Eton Group.

That way, PAL can make money out of its prime property, probably by the hundreds of millions of pesos, which it then can use to buy more airplanes. Nice.

Convergys expands to Bacolod

UNHAMPERED BY THE APPRECIATING peso, contact center firm Convergys is expanding to Bacolod City in the first quarter of 2008, earmarking about $3 million to build its ninth Philippine-based facility with an initial 300 employees.

The 3,000-square-meter facility at the San Antonio Park Square can accommodate about 500 employees.

Executive vice-president for Global Operations Clint Streit said the company was considering other locations in Western Visayas for future facilities.

He said that despite the appreciation of the peso, the company is growing fast enough to expand.

Business process outsourcing (BPO) firms recently expressed concern over the effects of the strong peso and are considering seeking government help.

Convergys, however, is already satisfied with the tax holidays recently granted by the government, said Streit.

"The government has been very supportive and we really can't ask for more. I think it is unfair to ask the government to step in to rein in the strengthening peso, which is more a function of the US economy's troubles," he said.

"What the private sector needs to do is look for ways to cope, say through hedging. We (Convergys) are into hedging and we try to bring down costs without sacrificing quality to protect our margins," he added.

As for future expansion after Bacolod City, country manager Marife Zamora said that the company was considering areas where there is an abundance of English-speaking college graduates who are also proficient in information technology.

Zamora told reporters that in Bacolod, for instance, the local talent pool speak English better than Filipino.

Once operational, the new Bacolod City facility will provide both general support and advanced technical help desk services to a variety of Convergys clients via traditional voice calling, e-mail, and web chat as well as "back office" application and document processing.

"Convergys offers its clients a choice of options where their outsourced customer care operations can be located. These locations are selected on many criteria including the availability and quality of the potential employee pool," Zamora said.

"I am proud that the Philippines offers an exceptionally motivated workforce of highly dedicated, well-educated, English-speaking professionals and the infrastructure needed to deliver world-class customer care," Zamora added.

The new contact center in Bacolod City will be closely integrated into Convergys' "Global Assurance Network."

This gives Convergys control of its end-to-end operations and processes, just as the company has in North America, Europe, and in India, and assures 100-percent redundancy and flexibility for clients.

Riza T. Olchondra

Local consortium to invest P200M in Subic shipyard

By Riza T. Olchondra

A CONSORTIUM OF LOCALLY based companies with international operations will be infusing more than P200 million to set up a new shipyard at the Subic Bay Freeport.

The project strengthens Subic's position as an investment site for companies involved in the shipping industry after Korean shipbuilding giant Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction chose the former naval base as a hub.

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority said in a statement that it had signed an agreement with the Subic Bay Shipyard Consortium (SBSC) to build a shipbuilding and repair facility at the former US Navy Ship Repair Facility (SRF) area.

Behind SBSC are Electruck, MAM Engineering Services, Subicdock and Subic Coordinates and Prime Solutions.

The shipyard project was conceptualized in 2005 to take advantage of excellent pier facilities at the SRF area.

The consortium plans to use the so-called "slipway and skid system" to accommodate vessels of up to 90 meters in length for dry docking and repair.

"We really see the necessity to upgrade the domestic fleet," SBSC president and CEO Nils-Ottar Lonoy said in a statement.

Construction of the new shipyard will begin next month and the entire shipbuilding facility is expected to be completed in three to five years, Lonoy said.

Lonoy said the consortium is hiring 180 direct and 300 indirect employees from some of the highly skilled workers formerly employed in the ship repair facility of the US Navy in Subic.

This number is expected to grow to 500 direct and 1,500 indirect jobs, bringing employment and livelihood to the area.

The company will be conducting skills training for all the Filipino ship repair workers.

About 20 percent of the total contract cost is expected to flow directly into the local economy.

On a larger scale, the project is expected to put Subic Bay and the Philippines on the map as a major location for ship-building.

Management services offered by the consortium include project management, CADD manpower, engineers and supervisors.

The consortium also offers shipbuilding and repair with workshops, warehouses, storage, accommodation, equipment, manpower, fabrication, technical design, assembly and electrical, blast and paint and related services.

SBMA investment processing head Ronnie Yambao added that shipyard services aside, Subic offers a competitive advantage to players in the shipping industry because of its integrated logistics facilities for storage, cargo loading and unloading, packaging, processing and information and transportation.

He said the SBMA is also offering incentives to locators like tax- and duty-free importation, a minimal 5-percent corporate tax on gross income, unrestricted entry of foreign investment, no foreign exchange control, and a four-to-six-year income tax holiday for qualified investors.

Palawan: Gateway to Southern Philippines

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

PALAWAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONSIDered part of Southern Philippines.

In fact, when the government and the Moro National Liberation Front signed the so-called Tripoli Agreement on Dec. 23, 1976, Palawan was included as the 13th province of the autonomous government. However, because of the referendum, the province did not become part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Due to its proximity to Mindanao, the province was also included in the broader subregional group, the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines-East Asian Growth Area, which the four countries formed in 1994.

In 2000, Palawan had a population of about 755,000.

The province, declared as a natural sanctuary, is endowed with natural resources and has become one of the best tourist destinations in the country. Its inclusion in the subregional group, which was created in an attempt to push for the development of the covered areas, was intended to alleviate poverty in the area as poverty incidence there in 1994 was at 54.50 percent.

As a result of its inclusion in the subregion, Palawan was able to form trade linkage with Kudat, which is part of Sabah in Malaysia.

According to the Mindanao Economic Development Concil (MedCo), the trade linkage was conceived as a port-to-port trading link between Sabah and Palawan. In a memorandum of understanding, the two sides agreed to undertake a concerted effort to promote trade and investments between the two areas.

Based on the agreement, Palawan can supply marine products, corn, fruits, coconut, virgin coconut oil, cashew nuts and seaweeds, while Sabah, through Kudat, can sell noodles, cooking oil and other grocery items.

Retired Gen. Efren Abu, Philippine special envoy for the subregion, believed the MOU would allow increased flow of goods between the two areas with Brooke's Point, a municipality, serving as a gateway to Malaysia.

Kudat, northern town of Sabah, is just 137 miles away from Brooke's Point and is about 12 hours by sea. Brooke's Point is the only municipality in Palawan that has a port.

But the subregional group leaders believed that in implementing trade linkages, they must be able to assure the protection and safety of the traders.

Since a year after its creation, leaders of the subregion have started discussing the harmonization of customs, immigration, quarantine and security (CIQS) policies of their respective countries with the hope of coming up with a comprehensive set of policies that will apply to all the members.

With its inclusion in the subregion and the continuing discussions on the CIQS, Palawan may eventually become one of the key areas of development in the country. With its natural resources and attractions, it is not far-fetched for the province to play a vital role in the development not just of itself but of Southern Philippines. After all, Palawan is nearer to Mindanao than to Metro Manila.

Erratum:

In the previous column, we failed to mention that the late Emmanuel Pelaez, a Mindanawan , was elected vice president of the country in 1965. Our apologies.

(Joji Ilagan Bian is an advocate for the development of Mindanao. She is chair of Joji Ilagan Foundation, Phil. Call Centers Alliance, Mindanao Tech Voc Schools Association. E-mail comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com.)

Additional VAT collection in 1st 6 months hit ₱12B

Portion of VAT earnings earmarked for infra projects

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue said it had collected P12 billion in additional value-added tax in the first half of the year.

This, according to the agency, was due to the implementation of the VAT Reform Law.

In a report to President Macapagal-Arroyo, BIR officer in charge Lilian Hefti said the first six-month collection surpassed the P11-billion target for the year.

RVAT—the centerpiece of the Arroyo administration's fiscal reform agenda—expanded the coverage of the tax to include oil and electricity, and raised the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent. The law took effect in November 2005, but the rate hike was implemented only in February 2006.

The government's VAT collection has been a closely monitored data, as the administration's revenue officials earlier vowed to increase spending in infrastructure and social services using proceeds from the VAT.

Authorities have earmarked 35 percent of the VAT collection this year as additional budget for social services and infrastructure, while 65 percent would be used to reduce the budget deficit.

Last year, the government met its target of raising P75 billion in additional revenue from the implementation of the VAT reform.

According to the Department of Finance, the government aims at collecting P87 billion in additional revenue from the VAT this year. Of the amount, 30 percent should be contributed by the BIR and 70 percent should come from the Bureau of Customs.

The BOC has yet to report VAT collection.

Despite the BIR's ability to meet its VAT collection goal, the tax measure was not enough to help the BIR meet its total VAT collection goal for the first six months of the year.

Data from the BIR earlier showed that total VAT collection in January to June reached only P67.88 billion, or 26 percent short of the P91.36-billion goal for the period. This also marked a 6-percent decline from year-ago's P72.04 billion.

BIR officials attributed the low VAT collection to the slowdown of the inflation to below-target levels. Because VAT is a form of sales tax imposed on gross revenue, they said, a decelerated increase in prices of commodities and services adversely affected VAT collection.

In the setting this year's collection goals, authorities assumed an inflation rate of between 4 and 5 percent. The actual inflation rate, however, was only 2.6 percent in the first six months.

Sykes Asia puts up ₱846-M call center in QC

By Ronnel W. Domingo

UNITED STATES-BASED TELECOMmunication firm Sykes Asia Inc. has secured tax incentives and other perks from the Board of Investments for its P846-million call center project in Quezon City.

According to the Dutch-owned firm, its site at the Sunnymede Center would have up to 1,908 seats for agents, although it would start operations with 1,539 agents.

At full capacity, the project would be employing a total of 2,608 agents and support personnel.

Sykes said the call center would offer both inbound and outbound call services, with specialization in technical support operations for clients in the American and European markets.

The company said its newest call center would cater to customers who were either considering to use or are already using products of Sykes Asia's clients.

Customers from abroad would be able to contact the call center through a toll-free or local number.

Each agent would be capable of providing support, information and troubleshooting services.

However, in case of jobs that are too complex to be resolved at the agent level, this would be forwarded to higher levels of Sykes Asia's network of service providers.

Stocks plunge 4%, peso slips to 46.23:$1

From page B1

regarded corporate earnings and all that was heard from the crowd today was—get out."

"The jitters will subside eventually and we may see the end of a major selloff. The market may then rebound and consolidate, while keeping an eye on how the credit crunch issues unfold," he said.

On the currency front, the peso's slide against the dollar came alongside offshore investors' massive dumping of assets from Asia's emerging economies due to ripples from the credit crunch in the United States.

The local currency shed 40 centavos to close at 46.23 from Tuesday's closing of 45.83 at the Philippine Dealing System.

The peso traded between a high of 45.95 and a low of 46.27 yesterday on volume of $744.44 million.

With the rising delinquency rate among America's subprime housing borrowers hitting more western banks, investors took the defensive stance of unloading emerging market assets, thereby weighing down on currencies in the region.

"The markets will remain volatile in the foreseeable future," a trader said.

Central banks in the region were suspected of selling dollars to stem any sharp currency freefall yesterday.

OFW remittances up 18% in first half

From page B1

tances or other travelers.

Preliminary data obtained from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) showed that the total number of deployed workers contracted by 5.1 percent to 546,212 in the first half of 2007 from a year ago.

Classified by type of worker, the number of land-based and sea-based workers fell by 3.2 percent to 422,262 and 11.1 percent to 123,950, respectively.

But Tetangco said the deployment of Filipino workers would likely pick up in the months ahead as the government, together with the private sector, already mapped out programs to intensify worker training and skills development.

Tetangco noted that last month, the Department of Labor and Employment launched a new Maritime Office that aims to ensure the Philippines' leadership in shipmanning through efforts to boost the competitiveness of Filipino seafarers.

The BSP report showed that the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Italy, Japan and Hong Kong remained as the country's major sources of remittances.

OFW remittances, a key factor keeping the country more resilient to shocks that could otherwise affect economic growth, inflation, external accounts and employment, have surpassed the $1-billion mark on a monthly basis since May 2006.

Doris C. Dumlao

PTT to invest . . .

From page B2

friendly approach to power generation.

The company also operates five gas separation plants that process natural gas products, including ethane, propane, liquefied petroleum gas and natural gasoline.

It is also developing and promoting the use of natural gas in the transport sector, with 102 retail service stations catering to natural gas vehicles.

In Thailand, PTT plans to sponsor 30,000 vehicles for natural gas conversion.

Secretary Reyes said the country needed at least $5 billion from this year to 2014 to fully develop its natural gas industry and expand the use of the fuel beyond power generation.

This amount would cover investments in developing the market, expanding gas supply sources and establishing the necessary infrastructure, he said.

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Berroya urges insurance firms to link up with LTO

LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE CHIEF Assec Reynaldo Berroya urged all accredited insurance companies issuing Compulsory Third Party Liability (CTPL) insurance policies to hook up with the LTO IT system to avoid unwarranted confusion and inconvenience. This developed as the LTO has received reports from its field offices that some insurance companies are not linked with the IT system of the LTO real time and on time.

Berroya also said that some of the insurance companies are still using the D-Tech Management system to have the Certificates of Cover (COCs) authenticated when in fact the LTO has already implemented a new interim system wherein the clearing house for the verification of CTPL policies would be conducted by Stradcom Corp, the LTO's exclusive IT provider.

The LTO chief added that the interim system is moving smoothly. The only problems being encountered right now are the link up of the insurance companies with the LTO system. Berroya said that he is going to meet with Pira officials to address the problem, and he will likewise issue a circular obligating all accredited insurance companies to have an IT system in place which is hooked up with the LTO system. Non-compliance to his planned circular will mean suspension of accreditation or outright blacklisting.

Berroya finally said that the LTO has currently in place the Certificate of Cover Verification Facility (COCVF) which is a system that employs the latest and best technology available today combined with the technical know how of the best people in the Information Technology industry. The said system allows online and real-time verification of CTPL-COC through the Land Transportation Office Information Technology System (LTO IT).

The COCVF would address the deficiencies in the insurance industry as the system utilizes a three-way matching capability that allows the policy to be locked on the details of the motor vehicle and to the accredited insurance company. This procedure eliminates the possibility of COC duplication insurance policies. This system will enforce that only motor vehicles with valid CTPL-COCs are allowed to register in any of the LTO agencies across the country. All motor vehicles registered with the LTO are covered with legitimate and valid CTPL-COC. Moreover, the effectiveness of this system has passed the intensive review and approval process undertaken by the three LTO committees leading the LTO IT Project.

Bits & Clips

Doing kanban the easy way

FOR THE FIRST EVER, QUALITY, SUPPLY chain, and factory managers will get the opportunity to learn how to apply real-life examples of kanban (Japanese signal device) from Toyota Motor and two major semiconductor firms in the 31st Management Benchmarking Forum on Aug. 16, at 1 p.m., Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City. Organized by Deming Management Systems, a Division of Kairos Management Technologies, this comparative learning session offers the participants the best way to learn kanban as a tool to reduce costly wastes in the shop floor and service areas. For registration, send e-mail to kairoshq@info.com.ph or contact Rey Elbo at 822-6660 or 751-6730.

Snapshots on ice with YKL Photo Solutions

FUJIFILM-YKL, THE INNOVATOR IN DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY, PROCESsing and printing, brings the exciting sport of ice skating closer to the traditionally tropical lifestyle of Filipinos with its special participation in the Skate Asia 2007 Competition at the grand skating rink of SM Mall of Asia until Aug. 18. Fujifilm-YKL will also unveil at the event its newest innovation, the YKL Photo Solutions, a photo management operational procedure, which aims to demonstrate a high-quality but convenient, accessible, and affordable digital printing technology to both participants and spectators alike. YKL Photo Solutions will provide Skate Asia 2007 snapshots of the contestants' ice routines, candid shots, winning moments, from the start to the end of every performances. Learn more about Photo Solutions, check out Fujifilm FinePix digital cameras, and enjoy superb Fujifilm digital photo printing technology only at official Fujifilm Digital Imaging Stations in malls, department stores, and freestanding branches nationwide.

Full-scale construction at Plaza Crest

THE PLAZA CREST, A 2.7-HECTARE LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL development in Sucat, Parañaque , is now undergoing full-scale construction to enable its owner-developer, DO Plaza Estates Inc, to complete and deliver Phase I within the early part of next year. The foundation of the first three-storey condominium building is now almost finished to be immediately followed by concreting and other civil works. Plaza Crest is accessible via San Pedro Street going to San Antonio Valley 2, a mere 500 meters from Sucat Road. Unit prices at Plaza Crest range from a low of P1.45 million to P5.97 million for a Premiere Model townhouse unit. Buyers may avail of in-house financing for 60 months under a flexible payment term that requires a payment of 30 percent only on the principal balance of the selling price. Model units are now available for viewing at the site, call 820-7969 or 0920-6014088.

ProductFILES

Sydenham's Jus' 4 Kids Plus

SYDENHAM LABORATORIES INC HAS launched Jus' 4 Kids Plus, a health juice drink for children that combines all the nutrients of the company's Jus' 4 Kids product line-up. Jus' 4 Kids is currently available in orange and mango flavors. The orange-flavored Zoom! Growth Enhancer has Chlorella Growth Factor or CGF, which promotes physical growth in children. The mango-flavored IQ Tonic Brain Booster, on the other hand, contains Taurine, an amino acid that helps in the development of the brain and nervous system of children. It is also fortified with Vitamins A, C, E, B1, B3, Zinc, and Iodine-micronutrients that help improve the growth and immune system of children. The health juice drink has been approved by the Department of Health, through its Sangkap Pinoy Seal Program, and the Bureau of Food and Drug. Jus' 4 Kids Plus is available in 250 ml Tetra Brick at leading supermarkets including SM, Robinsons, Puregold, Shopwise, Waltermart, South, Landmark, Cherry and Ever and other secondary outlets.

SS Aquarius, the right ship for your first cruise

FOR SOMEONE taking their very first cruise, SS Aquarius provides just the right dose of initiation to the sea, so to speak. It doesn't come on as too huge as to get constantly lost in a maze of aisles and cabins, or to be too overwhelmed by its sheer immensity. Neither is it too small as to feel it swaying here and there from restive waters. Cliché as it may sound, the luxury liner's three-day, two-night cruise to Xiamen out of Hong Kong, however short it is, affords the stressed-out work-a-day struggler the chance to get away from it all - to relax, unwind, recharge, let their hair down, make new friends, think nothing and do nothing but laze around, take in the scenery, shoot the breeze, eat and eat. There are a million and one things to do on board there is absolutely no time to get bored. The ship entertains you, from the moment you embark until you get off, almost reluctantly. The crew never runs out of smiles or a cheerful greeting. The schedule of activities will leave you breathless - for lots of choices and lack of time. For more information on the Star Cruises call Star Cruises Philippines at (632)521-5660 / 526-8401, fax (632)521-5637.

COLEGIO DE SAN AGUSTIN '82 HOMECOMING

Get ready to let the good times roll! On Aug. 25, Colegio de San Agustin Batch 1982 will celebrate its grand homecoming at the Colegio de San Agustin Gymnasium. Event proceeds will be for the benefit of a Gawad Kalinga housing project in Bicutan and the Adeodatus scholarship program. GK hosts people-empowering activities moving towards building integrated, holistic and sustainable communities focusing first and foremost on depressed areas throughout the Philippines. Part of the event's objectives is to raise enough funds to build two GK houses. The Adeodatus Scholarship Trust Foundation provides training opportunities and develops the socio-spiritual mindedness of its members. It also helps deserving but underprivileged youth through their education. The Colegio de San Agustin '82 homecoming is done in partnership with Chevron, PLDT, Smart, ICTSI, San Miguel, British Petroleum and Picture Company. For more details, call Nenita Cabral, or 843-9998 loc. 440. Shown are children from the GK housing project.

ECOLOGICAL AGRARIAN REFORM CENTERS FORUM

Joey Papa of Bangon Kalikasan Ecology Centers, in a recent ecology forum, urges officers and employees of the Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office in Bulacan to encourage farmers in the agrarian reform communities to shift to 100-percent organic farming to prompt the closure of all dumpsites which are now illegal and help mitigate the ill effects of global warming and climate change. Also shown are Provincial Agrarian Reform Support Services Officer Susie Carpio and Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer Ramon Estanislao, 2nd and 3rd from right, who also addressed the audience.

RUSTY LOPEZ JOINS 16TH NRCE

Rusty Lopez, the footwear and accessories brand known for its quality and affordability, signed up as the Philippine Retailers Association's Silver Sponsor for the 16th National Retailer's Conference & Stores Asia Expo (16th NRCE), the country's biggest retail event to be held from Aug. 15 to 17 (Expo) and Aug. 16 and 17 (conference) at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City. Shown, from left, are Rusty Lopez visual merchandising officer Madz Constantino, PRA president and SM SVP-operations Jorge Mendiola, Rusty Lopez marketing manager Jenny Martinez, PRA VP-national affairs and 16th Stores Asia Expo chair Paul Santos, and PRA chair and Sportshouse International president Mars Chua.

DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines is inviting interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

PROJECT	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
Hiring of Services of Events Supplier/Agency to handle the conduct of "READY, SET, RORO!" DBP Interisland Race 2007	P 9,500,000.00 SOURCE OF FUND: DBP FUND

*Bids received in excess of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

Schedule of Activities:

Particulars	Date	Venue
Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) and Eligibility Requirement Documents	"On or before" 9:00 a.m. of August 29, 2007 (Wednesday)	BAC Secretariat, 6th/Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Opening of Letter of Intent (LOI) and Eligibility Requirement Documents (Prospective Bidders are encouraged to attend the Opening of Eligibility Requirements Documents)	9:30 a.m. of August 29, 2007 (Wednesday)	OPS Conference Room, 6th/ Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Issuance of Bid Data Sheet/Terms of Reference	August 29-September 5, 2007	BAC Secretariat, 6th/Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Pre-Bidding Conference	September 5, 2007 (Wednesday) at 9:00 a.m.	OPS Conference Room, 6th/ Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Submission of Technical and Financial Proposals of Eligible Consultants/Bidders	"On or before" 9:00 a.m. of September 18, 2007 (Tuesday)	BAC Secretariat, 6th/Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Opening of Technical Proposals (Eligible Bidders are encouraged to attend the Opening of Technical Proposals)	September 18, 2007 (Tuesday) at 9:30 a.m.	OPS Conference Room, 6th/ Floor, DBP Building, Makati City

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents. Only those that are eligible will be allowed to submit bids.

The contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during the post-qualification. Interested parties may secure the Eligibility Requirement Forms from the BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City or you may download these forms at www.devbankphil.com.ph and at the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PHILGEPS) of the Department of Budget and Management. A non-refundable fee of Php 5,000.00 will be charged to all eligible bidders. Quality Based Evaluation/Selection will be used in the evaluation of proposals. The criteria and rating for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Terms of Reference (TOR).

The eligible bidders are advised to check the Bank's website and the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PHILGEPS) for bid bulletin and announcements regarding the project.

The Bank reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further inquiries, please call Telephone Numbers 8125702/8189511 loc. 2610.

Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–August 16, 2007)

SUN SOON TO RISE IN PALAWAN

Photo shows Puerto Prinsesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn (center) with (from left) IFM marketing assistant Mato Antenor, IFM supervisor Geray Cadiz and Sun Cellular senior manager for events Finnie Bonifacio and senior manager for innovations Vernier Umali at the Kinabuch Bar in Puerto Prinsesa. Sun Cellular and IFM hosted an event and provided entertainment and prizes for the locals and visitors in Puerto Prinsesa.

INSULAR LIFE TURNS OVER BOOKS TO NATIONAL LIBRARY

Insular Life recently turned over 500 copies of its Common Threads, Uncommon Lives: Profiles of Tofil Awardees, to the National Library. The company published the book with the hope that it will spark a fire among young Filipinos to strive for excellence. The National Library will take charge of distributing the books to libraries throughout the country. With this partnership, Insular Life aims to bring the message of excellence to the Filipino youth, particularly those in the far-flung areas in the Philippines. Shown is National Library Director Prudencia Cruz (center) accepting a copy of the book from Insular Life public relations head Ana Maria R. Soriano (4th from left). With them are (from left) National Library Collections Development Chief Yolanda E. Jacinto, National Library Assistant Director Flora A. Valmonte, and Insular Life public relations specialist Michelle D. Santos.

KRISPY KREME GOES TO BPI AYALA

Krispy Kreme, America's most loved doughnut, joins in the celebration of Bank of the Philippine Islands' 156th anniversary as it sets up a special Krispy Kreme outlet at the BPI head office lobby, Paseo de Roxas corner Ayala Avenue, Makati City until Aug. 31, from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday. Showcased are Krispy Kreme's world-famous Original Glazed Doughnuts and assorted doughnut varieties. Krispy Kreme gives doughnut and its signature coffee with a purchase of a dozen doughnuts using the newest BPI Express Mobile. New Krispy Kreme branches at Trinoma and Jaka Ayala Avenue open in October.

GBS JOINS UN-HQ WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATION

Goodwill Bookstore, through the invitation of the Arts and Science Collaboration Inc (ASCI), joined the United Nations Headquarters' celebration of the World Environment Day at the United Nations Plaza in New York City. Representing Goodwill and Bridges Bookstores during the event was its research and development officer, Stella Mari C. Vosotros. To reaffirm GBS' commitment and support to world environmentalism, copies of Tintin Bersola-Babao's Basura Monster illustrated book were distributed to program participants, guests and dignitaries. In photo, GBS' Stella Vosotros poses with the Irwins (wife and daughter of the late Steve Irwin of Crocodile Hunter show) during the World Environment Day event.

RP CHOIR JOINS INTERNATIONAL CHORAL COMPETITION

The Most Holy Redeemer Master Chorale, a church-based choir from the Most Holy Redeemer Parish Church, in Quezon City joined the recently concluded International Chorale competition 'A Voyage of Songs' held in Pattaya, Thailand, July 12-16. The choir, whose members came from ten different choral groups serving the church, has garnered gold and silver awards in the Open Mixed and Folklore Category, respectively. The Most Holy Redeemer Master Chorale is under the baton of Joey Mejia.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Philippine Sugar Center Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (02) 454-0254 • Website www.nfa.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of Autoclave and Accessories

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)*, through its *2007 Corporate Operating Budget* intends to apply the sum of *P2,000,000.00* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *supply and delivery of Autoclave and Accessories.* Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The *NFA* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the *supply and delivery of Personal and Notebook Computers.* Delivery is required within 60 calendar days from receipt of notarized contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **Instruction to Bidders (ITB).**

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *NFA-BAC SECRETARIAT* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.*

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of P2,500.00 in the form of *CASH.* The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The following activities shall be conducted at the *NFA Board Room, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City.*

a) Pre-Bid Conference - August 29, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.
b) Bid Submission and Opening – September 12, 2007
Submission of Bids – 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
Opening of Bids – 2:00 p.m.

All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Required Amount in Percent of ABC
Cash, cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or irrevocable Letter of Credit	One percent (1%)
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
Surety Bond stamped "Callable on Demand" on the face of the Bond issued by GSIS	Two and a half percent (2.5%)
Any combination of the above	Proportionate to share

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.

The *NFA* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procuring Entity – *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY*
Contact Person – *Jose D. Chua / Violeta S. Villarama*
Address – *Philsugin Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City*
Telephone/Fax No. – *(632) 455-2758*
Mobile Phone – *(928) 4102732*
e-mail address – *vsvillarama@nfa.gov.ph*
Website – *www.nfa.gov.ph*

(Sgd.) PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.
Deputy Administrator and BAC Chair
for Administration and General Support Services

(PDI – August 16, 2007)

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines

Mindanao Rural Development Project II

Proposed Construction of Gang-Macaguiling FMR

[Code No. 01-MSK-ShK-07]

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has applied for a Loan from the World Bank toward the cost of Mindanao Rural Development Project II, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the contract for Construction of Gang-Macaguiling FMR.
2. The **Municipality of Sultan Kudarat**, implementing partner of the Department of Agriculture, now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidder for *Proposed Construction of Gang-Macaguiling FMR.* Completion of the Works is required by *51 Calendar Days.*
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Subject to exceptions stated in this Bidding Documents, only Bids from Bidders who pass an eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Mondays to Fridays.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00). The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before *September 16, 2007 at 9:00 A.M.*
7. The *Municipality of Sultan Kudarat* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on *September 05, 2007 at 9:00 AM* at the following address Mayor's Office Conference Hall, Sultan Kudarat, Shariff Kabunsuan.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before *9:00 AM on September 17, 2007.* All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash, certified (manager's or cashier's) check, bank guarantee and in an amount specified in the bid documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on *September 17, 2007, 9:00 AM* at Mayor's Office Conference Hall, Sultan Kudarat, Shariff Kabunsuan. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at *9:00 AM on September 17, 2007.*
9. The *Municipality of Sultan Kudarat* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Ramon J. Ayson
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
Municipal Hall, Brgy. Dalumangcob, Sultan Kudarat, Shariff Kabunsuan 9605
Telephone No. (064) 429-0079; Telefax No. (064) 429-0081

(PDI--August 10 & 16, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF ILOILO
Luna St., La Paz, Iloilo City
Telefax (033) 320-1402

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education, **Division of Iloilo** through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for

NAME OF THE PROJECT : Supply and Delivery of Elementary Tables & Chairs, Elementary & Secondary Armchairs and Teachers Tables & Chairs
ABC & FUNDING SOURCE : Funding Source is the Government of the Philippines CY 2006 GAA (75% Allocation of the DepED Desk/Armchair Project
CONTRACT DURATION : One Hundred Twenty (120) Calendar Days
DELIVERY SITES : "Door to door" delivery to various recipient schools (See Schedule of requirements of the Bidding Documents)

LOT	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	ABC (Php)
A	Elementary Tables and Chairs (All wood)	14,001	28,002,000
	Elementary Armchairs (All wood)	9,783	7,630,740
	Teacher's Table with chair (All wood)	499	2,295,400
	TOTAL		37,928,140
B	Secondary Armchairs (Non-wood based)	16,420	18,062,000
	Teacher's Table with chair (All wood)	198	910,800
	TOTAL		18,972,800

The schedules of BAC activities are as follows:

BAC Activities	DATE and TIME	VENUE
1. Availability of Bidding Documents	August 22-28, 2007	BAC Office, 3rd Floor, Division of Iloilo, La Paz, Iloilo City
2. Pre-bid Conference	August 30, 2007, 10:00 A.M.	Function Room, 2nd Floor, Division of Iloilo, La Paz, Iloilo City
3. Receipt and Opening of Bids	September 12, 2007, 2:00 P.M.	Function Room, 2nd Floor, Division of Iloilo, La Paz, Iloilo City

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Office, DepED Division of Iloilo starting on August 22-28, 2007 upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Twenty Five Thousand Pesos (Php 25,000.00).

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulation of R.A. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at **http//www.deped.gov.ph** or **www.procurementservice.gov.ph** or call **DepED-Division of Iloilo at Telephone No. (033) 320-1402.**

The Department of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) GILBERT D. SOLIDUM
BAC Chairman

(PDI – August 16, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Local Civil Registry Office
Province of Abra
MUNICIPALITY OF LAGANGILANG

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of Republic Act No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that **LEONORA CAMPOSANO ANICAL** has filed with this Office a Petition for Change of First Name from **MARIA LEONORA** to **LEONORA** in the Certificate of Live Birth of **MARIA LEONORA ALCANTARA CAMPOSANO** who was born on **15 MARCH 1971** at San Antonio, Singalong, Manila and whose parents are **PABLO BARCIAL CAMPOSANO** and **CRISTINA HERMOSO ALCANTARA.**

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition with this office not later than two weeks upon publication.

(Sgd.) Engr. ROSELILY RAMOS ABORJE
Municipal Civil Registrar

(PDI – August 16, 2007)

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SM Megamall Branch, 5th Floor Building B,
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ERRATUM

In the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid of **Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP)** published July 20, the opening of bids for the project One (1) lot Supply, Installation and make-operational of a complete audio equipment for the Plenary Convention Hall of BSP Davao Regional Office, should have read **August 14, 2007** and NOT August 12.

Our apologies.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be informed that **MS. RITA TAN ABAYA** whose picture appears above has been terminated by Allied Banking Corporation effective 13 August 2007. Any transaction entered into with her from said date shall not be honored by the Bank.

(PDI–August 16, 2007)

More Classified Ads
Department of Labor-NCR A6
National Food Authority A7
National Housing Authority A7
Development Bank of the Philippines B6

OBITUARIES

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

DOMINGO CHUA CHAM

who peacefully joined his Creator on August 4, 2007

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude & sincerest appreciation to all those who came to pay their last respects and those who sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

OBITUARIES

Our Dearly Beloved

NICOLAS CRESCINI

September 16, 1930 – August 13, 2007

His loving wife, **CONCEPCION**, children; **EDDIE & ELIZABETH, ERLINDA & NATHANIEL, MERLE & RICHARD, GEMMA & PERRY, JACKSON & AB CORAZON, MARICEL & BENEDICT, AILEEN & FAUSTINO, NICKSON & JENNIFER**, grandchildren; **EUGENE ELSON, NELVIN CHARLES, JULES ALBERT, STEVE GLENDON, ELLICE EDLYN, NIELSEN EARL, NATHAN EARL, NATHALIE ELLOISE, MICA, RAYMOND, MAEGAN, DANICA MAE, MARQUIS JAVON, MARCUS JAVIN, MARIELLE JENNA, COLENE NICOLE, JANINE CZARENINA, CARMELLE THERESE, RAPHAEL NICOLSON, MAECHELLE BRIGETTE, DICK MICHOLSON, MARK BENDRICK, MIKAELA BEATRICE, NICKY JEN, NICKO JAMES, NICK JENSON** and **NICK JEVAN**, the family request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Good Shepherd Chapel, Archbishop Residence, Elias Angeles St., Naga City.

Interment will be on the 19th day of August, 2007 (Sunday), 11:00 a.m. at Sto. Niño Memorial Park, Balatas Road, Naga City.

SANCTUARIUM
Where memories live forever

China Bank at 87: Going Beyond Expectations

The country's first privately-owned universal bank, China Bank, is 87 years old today, August 16, 2007. Strong, resilient, and driven by an impassioned commitment to serve its clients, the bank has weathered the devastation of war, the ripple effects of the currency crisis and changes in the economic and political climate, over the course of its almost nine decades of successful operations.

The China Bank story started in 1920 when the bank was founded by Don Albino Z. Sycip and Dee C. Chuan, along with leaders of the older and younger generations of Manila-based family businesses, with a starting capital of P2,579,800 and high hopes for the future. China Bank was the first Philippine bank founded by local businessmen. On August 16, 1920, the bank opened for business at No. 9 Quintin Paredes (formerly Rosario) Street, Binondo, but when the Japanese occupation forces invaded Manila on January 1942, China Bank closed. It reopened in July 23, 1945 made possible with close to P8 million overseas assets and the Bureau of Banking's full cooperation. Since then, a succession of highly capable leaders and visionaries have steered China Bank into years and decades of fruitful banking operations.

Through all these, China Bank remains one of the strongest and most stable banks posting consistent record income of well over P3 billion annually, in the last three years. Early this year, China Bank increased its capital stock from P10 billion to P16 billion and declared over P3 billion in total dividends for holders of common shares in the form of a 25% or P25 per share cash dividend and a 25% stock dividend. But beyond the numbers, the unwavering support of generations of loyal and satisfied clients and its openness to change and evolve with the times are the factors that buoyed China Bank through the years. The bank's constant enhancements in its product offerings, banking systems, and branch network, have made this old and respected institution, a modern and responsive bank.

Beyond gratitude

China Bank attributes its continued success to the patronage of its clients. Last March, the bank launched a deposit promo dubbed **"P8.7M at 87,"** to run until September 30, 2007 as a way of thanking its clients. The bank is giving away a total of P8.7 million, tax free, to over one hundred lucky China Bank depositors who will win P10,000, P100,000, and P1 million in bi-monthly draws from May to September, and up to P2 million in the grand draw in October. "This is our simple gesture of thanking and rewarding our loyal clients who have supported China Bank throughout its 87 years of banking service," shared SVP and Branch Banking Deputy Group Head, Samuel L. Chiong. To date, 76 depositors already won big cash prizes, including two winners of the P1million grand prize in the preliminary draws.

Beyond organic growth

China Bank looks at growth and expansion not only to strengthen its operations, but also to touch base with more people, bringing China Bank's brand of personalized customer service to a wider area. Aside from expanding China Bank's reach from the inside - signing up new partners to grow the remittance business, opening new branches in the countryside, and offering new products for a specific market niche – China Bank looked for another way to accelerate the growth. In June, the bank signed a memorandum of agreement with **Manila Bank** to **acquire the majority shares – 87.51% of Manila Bank's subscribed shares** – owned by the Puyat block. The deal is subject to approval by the Monetary Board and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The resulting merger will boost China Bank's network of 158 branches by 75 from Manila Bank, on top of China Bank's ongoing three-year branch expansion program. China Bank President and CEO Peter S. Dee said, "Our 3-year business plan calls for an aggressive expansion of our distribution network, together with substantial growth in our assets and loan portfolio. This acquisition will boost our branch network substantially to over 250 branches, including the expansion program we already started even before this deal. With a bigger footprint and network, we are now in a better position to compete more effectively with the bigger competitors in the banking industry."

Beyond the usual

Ever focused on strengthening its operations to better serve clients, China Bank continued to beef up its consumer lending, private banking, trust banking, and remittance businesses.

China Bank lowered its housing loan rates last year and further reduced it to **7.5% p.a. for the first year.** The special rate is offered until the end of August 2007. "We cut our home loan rate so our clients can have more affordable monthly payments," said Reynaldo L. Lao, SVP for Consumer Banking, "lower rates mean more savings for our clients." The bank's Private Banking business also underwent major enhancements. A new head was hired along with other highly skilled relationship managers to help grow the business and handle the banking requirements of China Bank's affluent clients. **A series of wealth management fora was conducted** from April to July, to provide clients with practical tips and advice on managing, preserving, and enhancing their wealth. The Trust Banking Group, enhanced its product offering with the recent launch of **Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust and Employees' Savings & Investment Program.** The Remittance business continues to expand as the efforts remain focused in developing tie-ups in countries with high concentrations of Filipino expatriates. With market penetration initiatives aggressively implemented, the Bank now has foreign remittance tie-ups in the U.S., Singapore, Taiwan, Hawaii, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates, and a local remittance partner, M.L. Lhuillier.

Beyond banking

China Bank believes in providing a strong customer value. The bank offers a wide array of banking products and services, some of which can be tailor-fitted to a client's specific requirements. But China Bank is going a step further with its **strategic alliance with Manulife**, one of the leading insurance companies in the world. The bancassurance joint venture, announced in January and to begin operations by third quarter of 2007, subject to Monetary Board approval, allows the bank to offer a wide range of superior and innovative insurance products, giving China Bank the competitive edge of being a one-stop shop for banking and insurance needs.

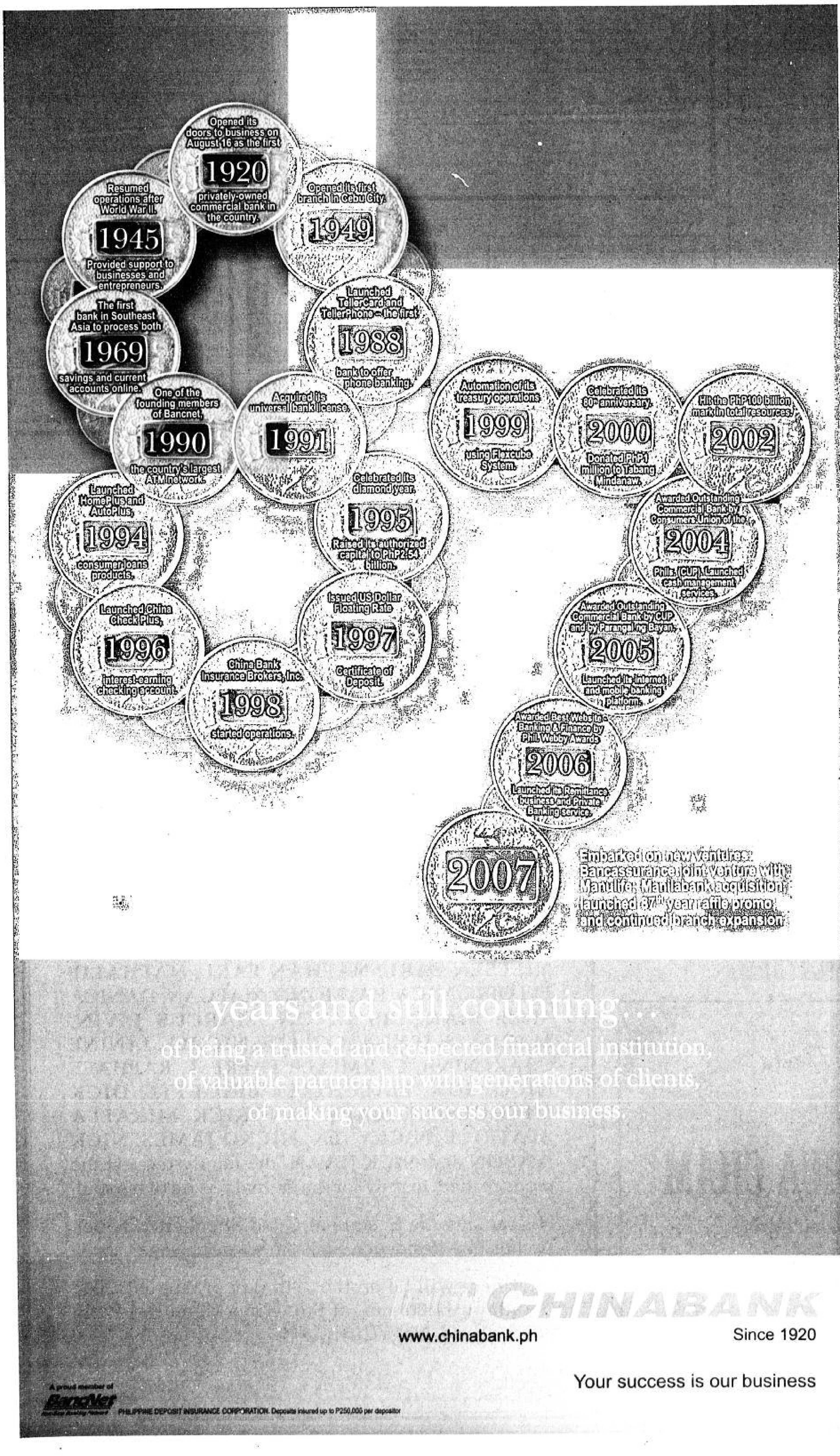
"We are very excited about this partnership," said EVP and COO Ricardo R. Chua. "We have carefully and meticulously planned this venture with Manulife to consolidate and benefit from each other's various strengths. Our teams share tremendous synergy and I feel confident we will achieve our targeted business goals."

With two powerhouses on board, this bancassurance joint venture is poised to set a new standard of excellence in the country.

Beyond the familiar

China Bank has done something major that people now see the bank in a whole new light - change its look. In September 2006, the Bank **unveiled its understated, clean, stylish new look** with the opening of its new mall branches, SM Clark and SM Lipa. The two branches were the first of the 60 to be opened in the next three years. To date, the bank has opened 17 new branches, relocated 5, and renovated 4 branches utilizing the bank's new look. "We're changing with the times to stay attuned to our clients' needs. The redesigning of our branches is one aspect of our strategy to enhance their over-all banking experience with us," said Chiong.

Changing, evolving, transforming. But if there is anything constant in the way China Bank conducts its business, it's how it puts great value on people - its customers, employees, shareholders, and stakeholders. China Bank anchors its operations on honest and efficient service and prides itself in its prudent management that has resulted to good returns for investors and shareholders. The bank remains steadfast in its commitment to find ways to grow bigger, better, and stronger to exceed customer expectations. Then, now, and in the future, for China Bank, "your success is our business."


Opened its doors to business on August 16 as the first 1920 privately-owned commercial bank in the country.
Resumed operations after World War II. 1945 Provided support to businesses and entrepreneurs.
Opened its first branch in Cebu City. 1949
The first bank in Southeast Asia to process both 1969 savings and current accounts online.
Launched TellerCard and TellerPhone – the first 1988 bank to offer phone banking.
One of the founding members of Bancnet, 1990 the country's largest ATM network.
Acquired its universal bank license. 1991
Launched HomePlus and AutoPlus, 1994 consumer loans products.
Celebrated its diamond year. 1995 Raised its authorized capital to PhP2.54 billion.
Launched China Check Plus, 1996 interest-earning checking account.
Issued US Dollar Floating Rate 1997 Certificate of Deposit.
China Bank Insurance Brokers, Inc. 1998 started operations.
Automation of its treasury operations 1999 using Flexcube System.
Celebrated its 80th anniversary. 2000 Donated PhP1 million to Tabang Mindanaw.
Hit the PhP100 billion mark in total resources. 2002
Awarded Outstanding Commercial Bank by Consumers Union of the 2004 Phils. (CUP). Launched cash management services.
Awarded Outstanding Commercial Bank by CUP and by Parangal ng Bayan. 2005 Launched its internet and mobile banking platform.
Awarded Best Website - Banking & Finance by Phil. Webby Awards 2006 Launched its Remittance business and Private Banking service.
2007
Embarked on new ventures: Bancassurance joint venture with Manulife; Manilabank acquisition; launched 87th year raffle promo and continued branch expansion
years and still counting...
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of valuable partnership with generations of clients,
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LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

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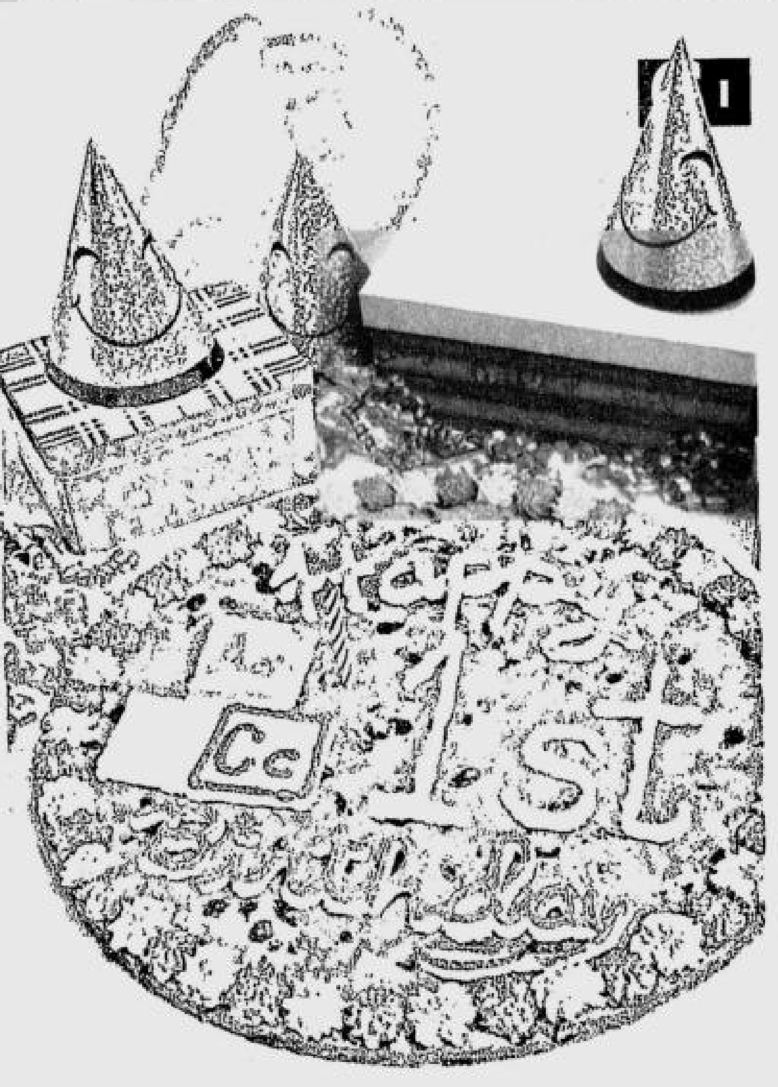
TUESDAY **FITNESS** ◉ WEDNESDAY **2BU** ◉ THURSDAY **FOOD** ◉ FRIDAY **FASHION &**



MRS. FIELD'S cookie cake

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Edible trinkets for first birthday

MY DAUGHTER IS TURNING 1 and I would appreciate your advice as far as giveaways and party ideas are concerned. Please help!

MRS. CHAVEZ

I like calling them edible trinkets, fancy knickknacks that are cute to give away as tokens in parties or to have as part of your buffet spread.

Conceptualizing little presents is something I love to do. What is a party after all without a little token for your guests as a sign of appreciation?

I have some favorites. Little things that make me happy by mere sight. As far as taste goes, well, they taste as good as they look.

Mrs. Field's (tel. 8441241) is opening The Cookie Café today at TriNoma and on Aug. 22 at the Manila Pavilion. Unlike their other stalls, these two new places come complete with cookie-blended milk and coffee shakes, muffins, cookie cups, cookie cakes and cookie cards.

Their cookie cakes are such a delight. The picture on this page says it all. I sampled their cookie cups. They are from our favorite cookie dough, turned into cupcakes, laden with white or chocolate icing. It is everything that the kid in us craves for.

I received an invitation for the 16th birthday of my good friend Nelia Dee's daughter Isabelle. So straight away I called the ever reliable Gina Navarro of Estrelle's (tel. 3722965) and told her I needed cupcakes.

There is something about those buttercream roses on their caramel cakes that make me so happy. They look so girly girl.

Perfect, I thought, for someone turning sweet 16. Just as I envisioned, they turned out to be as sweet as sweet could be! Beautifully delicious!

Chef Tony's popcorn (tel. 0922-8791317) is undoubtedly the best. Each year, as my son turns a year older, I give them to my guests to munch on as they watch a documentary of my son Diego's life and times! And he is just 3!

Call me a nut! Yes, I am! Chef Tony can make them in all colors and flavors.

Then there is Karen Young's Chocolate Ganache (tel. 8982280) which, for me, is one of the best in its category. She makes them in minis. Beautiful packaging. She will personalize them for you, too!

Diet for diabetic

My wife is pregnant and she was diagnosed with gestational diabetes two months ago.

She has been asked to inject insulin before breakfast and lunch because it is difficult to control her blood sugar. But still, it is important that she controls what she eats!

She has 10 more weeks to go and we need your help in coming up with dishes that are low in sugar, fat and carbohydrates, high in protein, high in vegetables as well.

Also, any suggestions on the following:

- **Restaurants that are diabetic-friendly?**
- **Dessert which does not use sugars or artificial sweeteners?**

Any help to make my wife's diet more exciting will be most welcome!

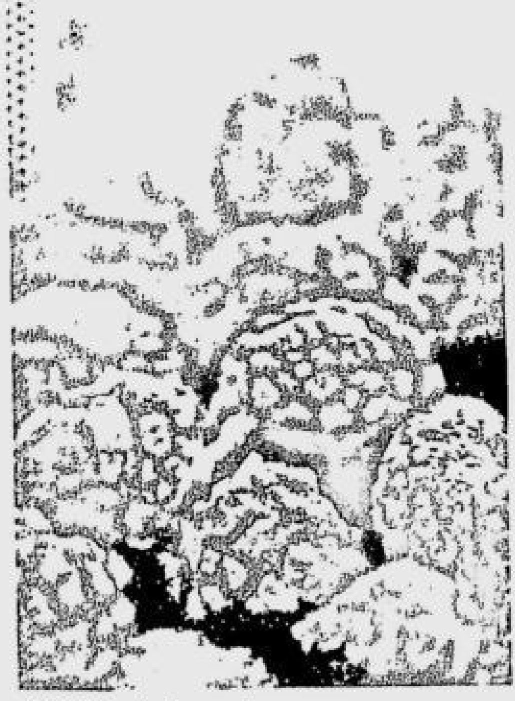
MARLO

All restaurants should have something on their menu for diabetics. The key is knowing what is good for her or not. Try Cibo, Pepato or Café Bola. Margarita serves her Sostanza health line menu at her outlets.

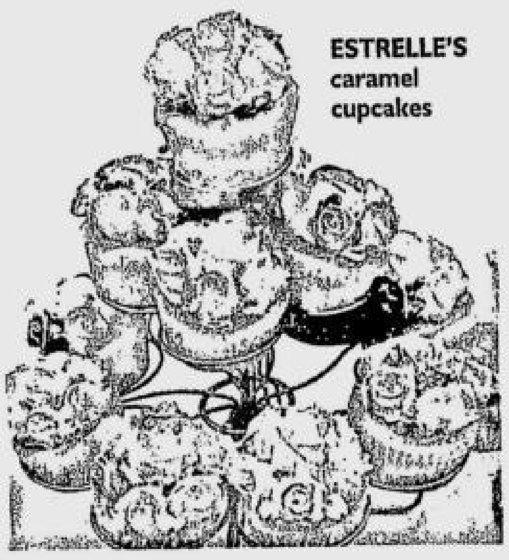
Karen Young makes many kinds of sugar-free desserts. Personally, I like those laden with real sugar but then again, for those who can't have them, her desserts might be the next best thing.

It's sad to hear that your wife is going through all that. I would love to help out as I know a thing or two about diabetic cuisine but I would rather not.

EDIBLE/ C4



CHEF Tony's flavored popcorn



ESTRELLE'S caramel cupcakes

> Little things that make me happy by mere sight also taste as good as they look

CCAC CHINESE CULINARY ARTS CENTER
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Tel: (632) 530-2053; 525-2720

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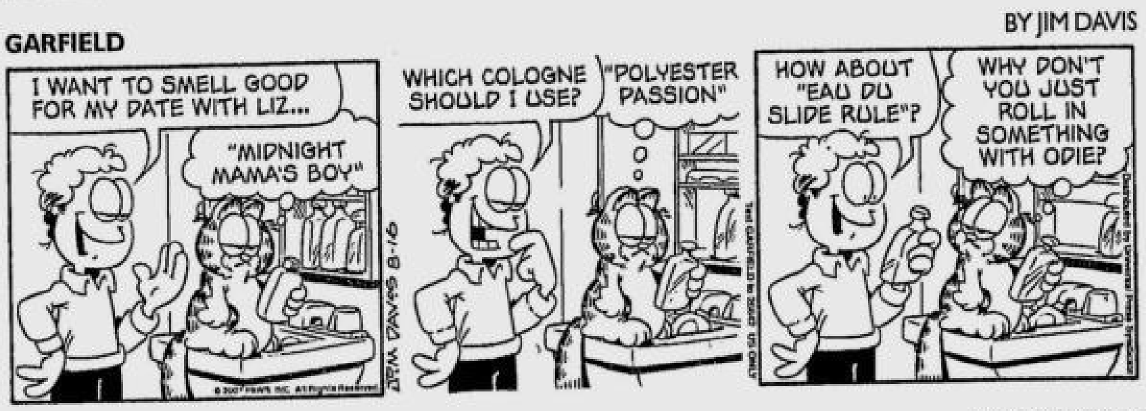
ADRIATICO-MALATE	ALABANG	BINONDO	CALOOCAN	CEBU	GREENHILLS
May	Gemma	Razel	Olive	Juna	Eleanor
5360619/5259891	8090395/7750587	2421312/2420728	3657653	231 3254	7266505/7261526
0921 4669423	0918 3912510	0917 8224399	0915 8804668	0915 8797217	0917 8261204

H.V.DELA COSTA	LEGASPI VILL.	MEGAMALL	PASAY ROAD	PASIG	SM NORTH	SUBIC
Emily	Lani	Ruby	Maan	Abbie	Michelle	Beth
8140138/8140151	8938935	6313869/6377543	8871335/8873530	6815333/6473816	9295429/9264215	2526514
0928 2107247	0928 9719938	0916 2479753	0915 6893088	0928 4763108	0905 2690717	0928 6712299

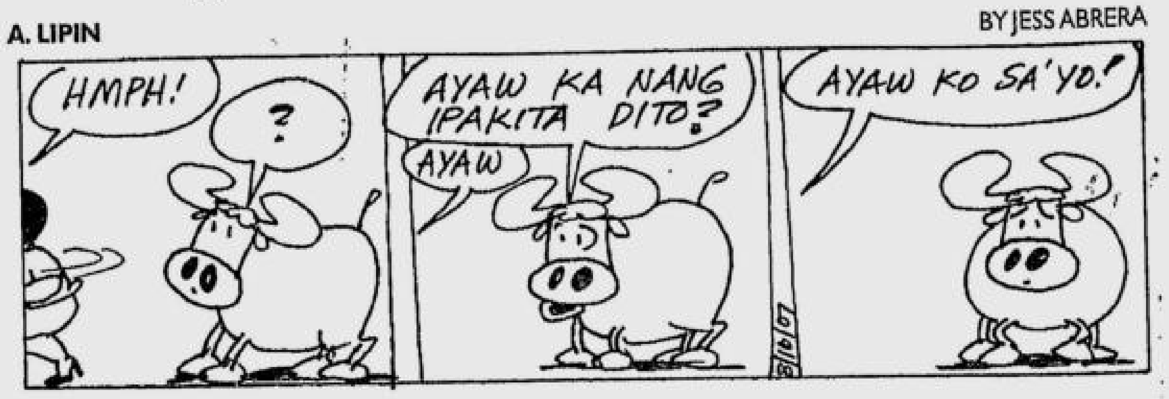
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


I WANT TO SMELL GOOD FOR MY DATE WITH LIZ...
"MIDNIGHT MAMA'S BOY"
WHICH COLOGNE SHOULD I USE?
"POLYESTER PASSION"
HOW ABOUT "EAU DU SLIDE RULE"?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST ROLL IN SOMETHING WITH ODIE?
JIM DAVIS 8-16

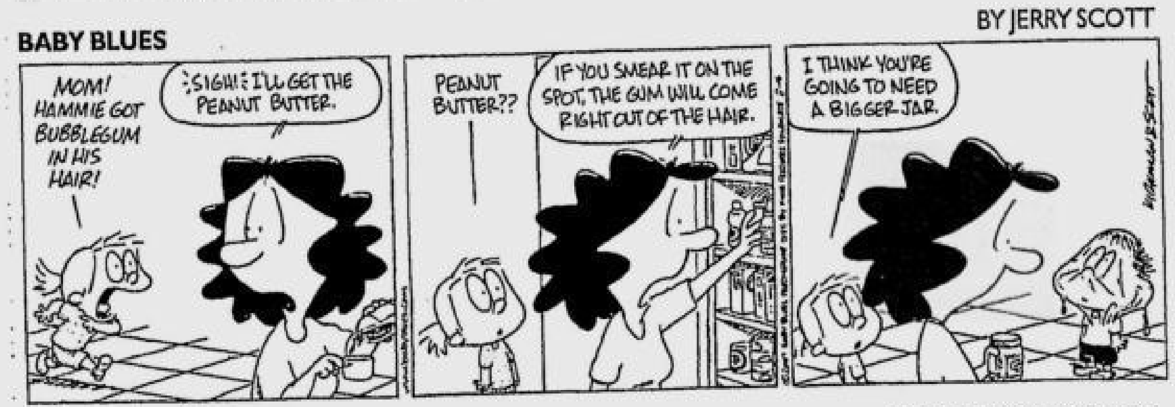
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HMPH!
?
AYAW KA NANG IPAKITA DITO?
AYAW
AYAW KO SA'YO!
8/16/07

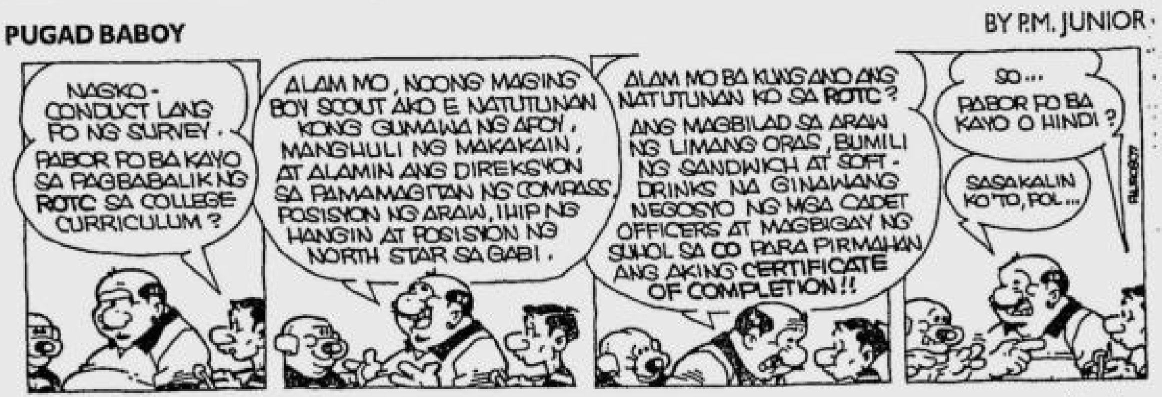
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOM! HAMMIE GOT BUBBLEGUM IN HIS HAIR!
SIGH! I'LL GET THE PEANUT BUTTER.
PEANUT BUTTER??
IF YOU SMEAR IT ON THE SPOT, THE GUM WILL COME RIGHT OUT OF THE HAIR.
I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO NEED A BIGGER JAR.

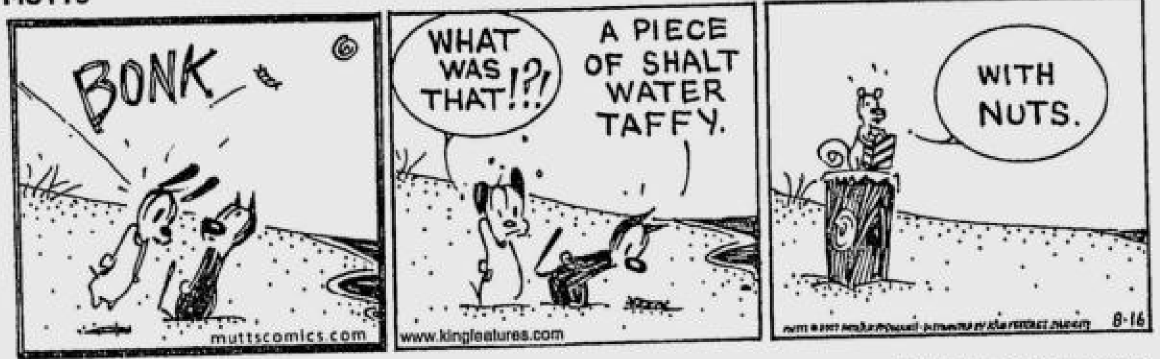
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAGKO-CONDUCT LANG PO NG SURVEY. PABOR PO BA KAYO SA PAGBABALIK NG ROTC SA COLLEGE CURRICULUM?
ALAM MO, NOONG MAGING BOY SCOUT AKO E NATUTUNAN KONG GUMAWA NG APOY, MANGHULI NG MAKAKAIN, AT ALAMIN ANG DIREKSYON SA PAMAMAGITAN NG COMPASS, POSISYON NG ARAW, IHIP NG HANGIN AT POSISYON NG NORTH STAR SA GABI.
ALAM MO BA KUNG ANO ANG NATUTUNAN KO SA ROTC? ANG MAGBILAD SA ARAW NG LIMANG ORAS, BUMILI NG SANDWICH AT SOFT-DRINKS NA GINAWANG NEGOSYO NG MGA CADET OFFICERS AT MAGBIGAY NG SUHOL SA CO PARA PIRMAHAN ANG AKING CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION!!
SO... PABOR PO BA KAYO O HINDI?
SASAKALIN KO 'TO, POL...

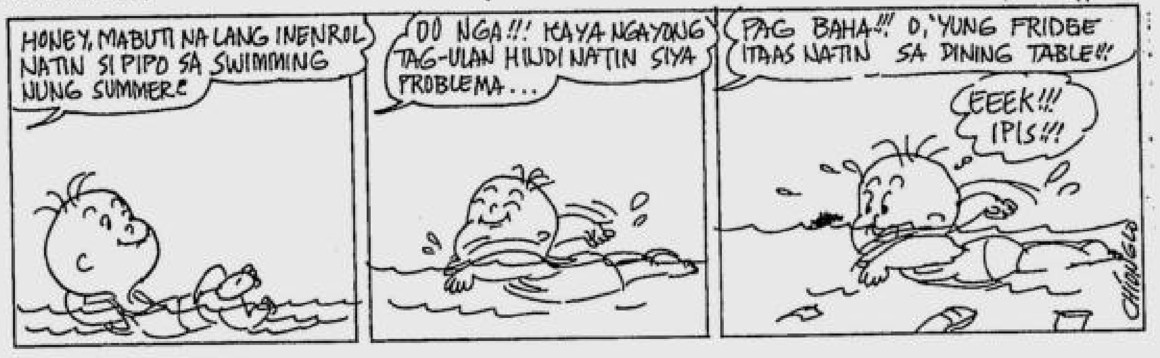
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


BONK
WHAT WAS THAT!?!
A PIECE OF SHALT WATER TAFFY.
WITH NUTS.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
8-16

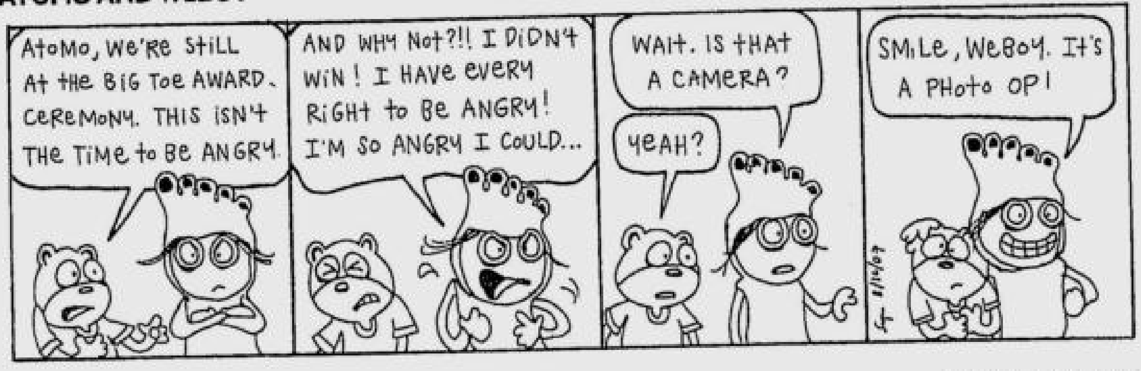
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HONEY, MABUTI NA LANG INENROL NATIN SI PIPO SA SWIMMING NUNG SUMMER!
OO NGA!!! KAYA NGAYONG TAG-ULAN HINDI NATIN SIYA PROBLEMA...
PAG BAHA!!! O, 'YUNG FRIDGE ITAAS NATIN SA DINING TABLE!!!
EEEK!!! IPIS!!!
CHIONGLO

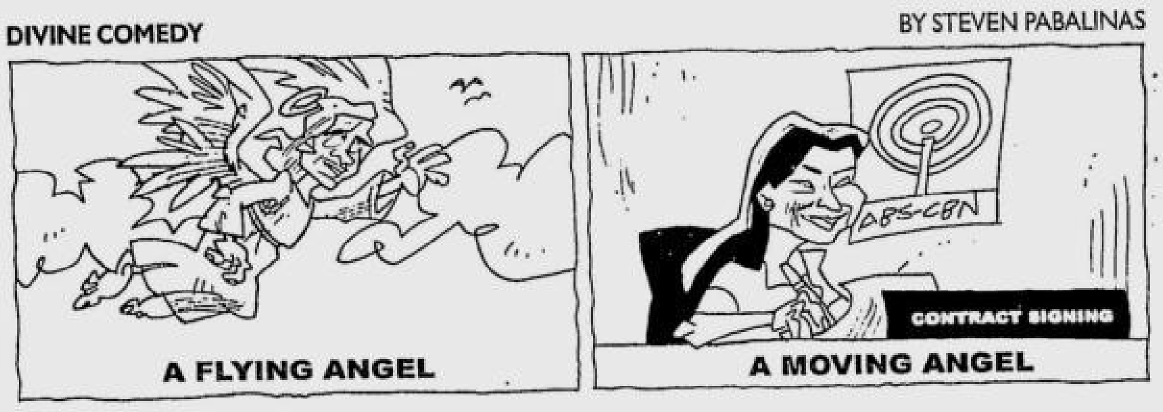
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


AtoMo, We're Still At the BiG Toe AWARD CereMony. This isn't The Time to Be ANGRY.
AND WHY Not?!! I DiDN't WiN! I HAve every RiGht to Be ANGRY! I'M So ANGRY I COULD...
WAit. IS that A CAMERA?
YeAH?
SMiLe, WeBoY. It's A PHoto OP!

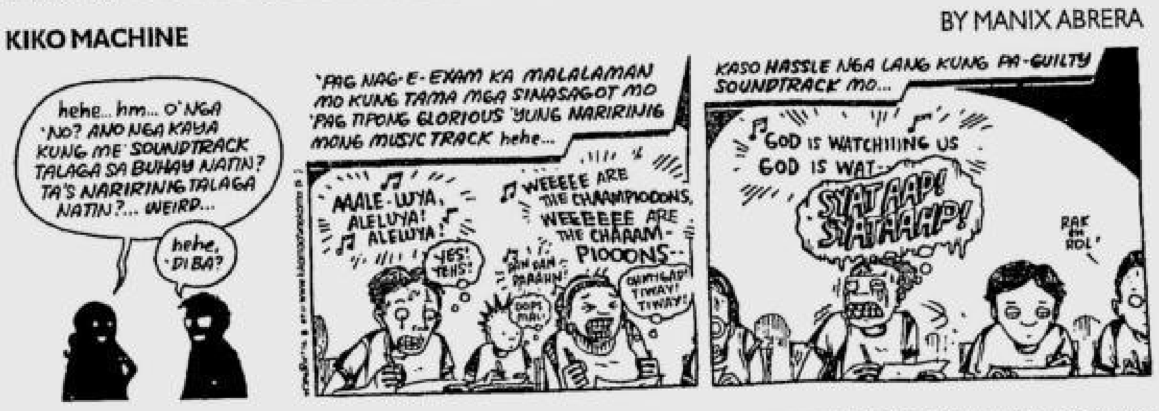
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ABS-CBN
CONTRACT SIGNING
A FLYING ANGEL
A MOVING ANGEL

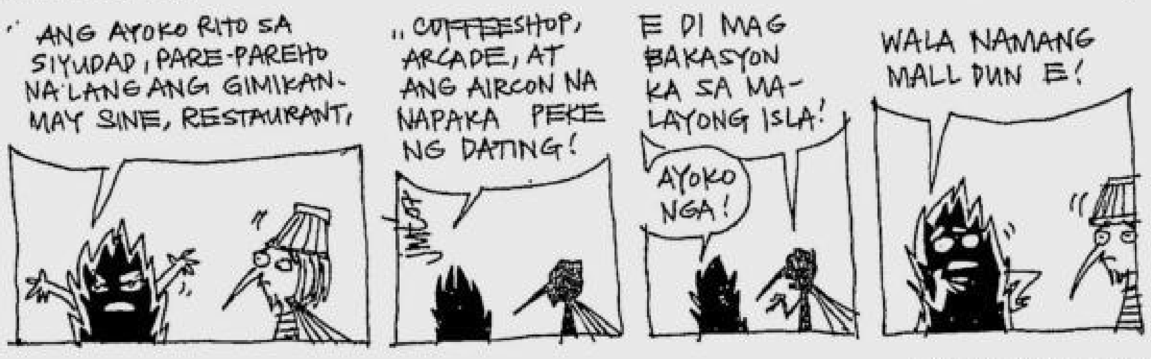
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hehe... hm... O'NGA 'NO? ANO NGA KAYA KUNG ME' SOUNDTRACK TALAGA SA BUHAY NATIN? TA'S NARIRINIG TALAGA NATIN?... WEIRD...
hehe, DI BA?
'PAG NAG-E-EXAM KA MALALAMAN MO KUNG TAMA MGA SINASAGOT MO 'PAG TIPONG GLORIOUS 'YUNG NARIRINIG MONG MUSIC TRACK hehe...
MALE-LUYA, ALELUYA! ALELUYA!
WEEEEE ARE THE CHAAMPIOOONS, WEEEEEE ARE THE CHAAAM-PIOOONS
YES! YEHS!
KASO HASSLE NGA LANG KUNG PA-GUILTY SOUNDTRACK mo...
GOD IS WATCHIIING US GOD IS WAT-
SYATAAP! SYATAAAP!
RAK EN ROL!

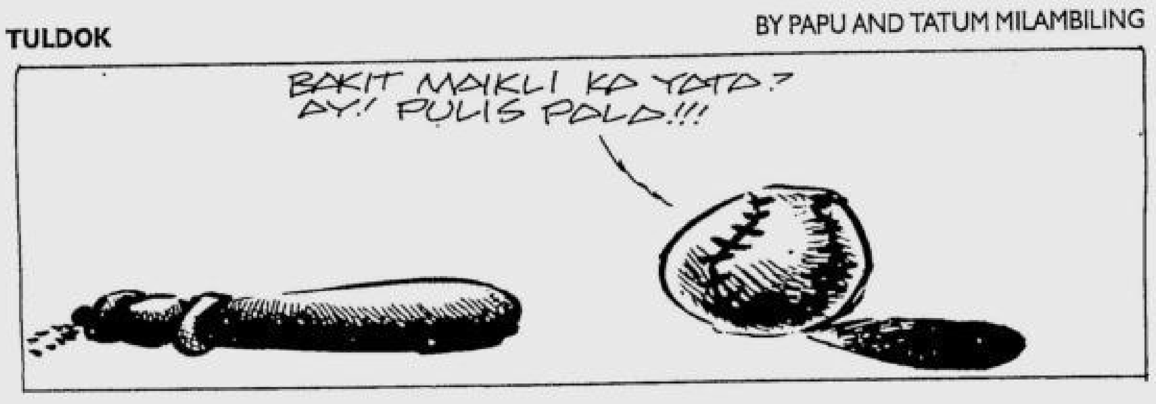
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG AYOKO RITO SA SIYUDAD, PARE-PAREHO NA LANG ANG GIMIKAN. MAY SINE, RESTAURANT,
COFFEESHOP, ARCADE, AT ANG AIRCON NA NAPAKA PEKE NG DATING!
E DI MAG BAKASYON KA SA MALAYONG ISLA!
AYOKO NGA!
WALA NAMANG MALL DUN E!

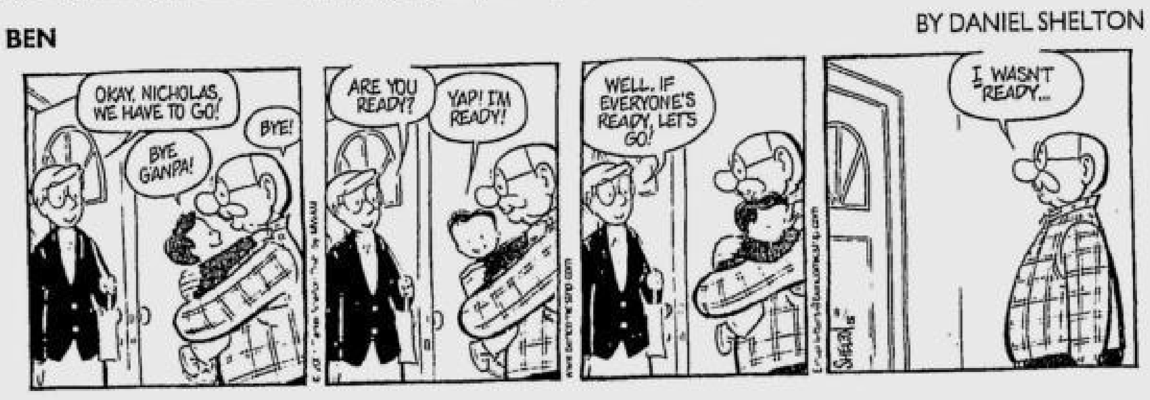
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

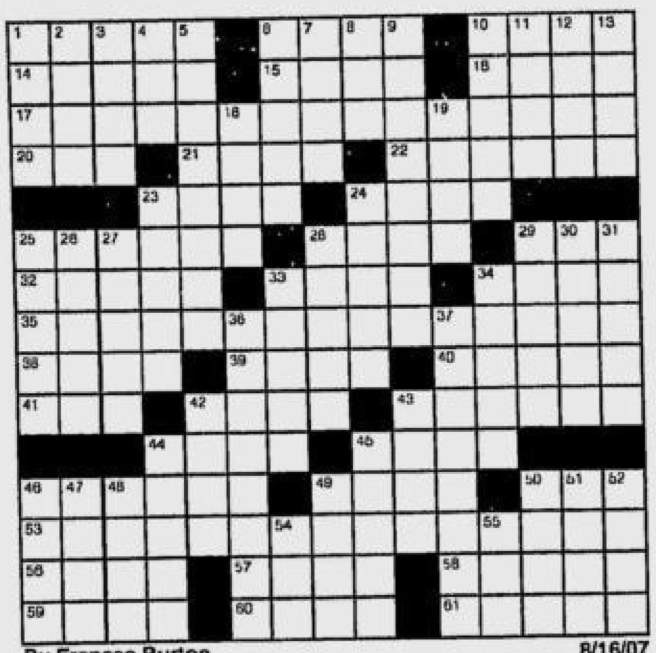

BAKIT MAIKLI KA YATA? AY! PULIS PALA!!!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


OKAY, NICHOLAS, WE HAVE TO GO!
BYE GANPA!
BYE!
ARE YOU READY?
YAP! I'M READY!
WELL, IF EVERYONE'S READY, LET'S GO!
I WASN'T READY...

DAILY CROSSWORD


8/16/07

By Frances Burton
Summerville, GA

ACROSS
1 Moral system
6 Small Egyptian vipers
10 Guinness or Baldwin
14 Smackers
15 Bog product
16 Impudence
17 Start of a query
20 Prom wear
21 Cougar's den
22 Was without
23 Shuttlecock
24 Encounter
25 Big oaf
28 Newcastle product
29 Mayday signal
32 Freeze over
33 Bluenose
34 Sound of pain
35 Part 2 of query
38 Netting
39 Anticipation
40 Bombay wraparound
41 Grand poem
42 Deadly poison
43 Bacall's love
44 Handy bag
45 Masculine
46 Isaac and Howard
49 Part of a casa
50 __ de cologne
53 End of query
56 Ravel
57 Continental dough
58 Third rock from the sun
59 Minstrel's ballads
60 Disengage from a habit
61 Attire

DOWN
1 Give off
2 Soy product
3 Publicity stunt
4 __ at ease
5 Midway organ
6 Garden pest
7 Tea-leaf reader
8 Manhandle
9 Fred Flintstone's time
10 Lace end
11 Cheryl or Alan
12 Choice word
13 Enclothed
18 Acerbic
19 Rod attachment
23 Tree branch
24 Watered silk fabric
25 Thingamajig
26 Played a part
27 Rental agreement
28 French pancake
29 "Kama __"
30 Dark yellow
31 Item of bedding
33 "Sorry Wrong Number" prop
34 Missouri tributary
36 How you doin'?
37 Separated
42 __ of contention
43 South Pacific isle
44 Threesomes
45 Della Street's boss
46 Author Bellow
47 Albacore or bluefin
48 Miniature whirlpool
49 Evening in Milano
50 Ireland, to a poet
51 Leaf-cutters, e.g.
52 Inarticulate grunts
54 Pool stick
55 Veteran seafarer

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

A	R	A	M		B	R	A	V	E		C	L	A	W
L	I	M	O		L	U	G	E	R		A	O	N	E
M	O	A	N		A	L	I	N	E		P	E	O	N
A	T	H	O	U	S	A	N	D	C	L	O	W	N	S
			L	S	T				T	I	N			
E	T	H	O	S		P	S	T		F	E	S	T	S
T	H	E	G	R	E	A	T	E	S	T		H	O	I
H	E	R	S		T	R	O	T	S		M	O	O	G
E	T	O		S	H	O	W	O	N	E	A	R	T	H
R	A	D	I	O		L	E	N		A	T	E	S	T
			R	O	M				T	S	E			
M	A	N	O	N	A	T	I	G	H	T	R	O	P	E
A	R	O	N		M	E	N	L	O		I	T	E	R
L	I	S	I		B	A	R	E	R		E	T	A	L
A	L	E	C		A	L	I	E	N		L	O	S	E

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8/15/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have big ideas and big goals. Everything you do is a little bigger than life. People admire you because you have style. You're highly original and full of flair, but easily hurt by criticism. Many of you like to flirt with danger. You need recognition and admiration. The year ahead is wonderfully social, and blesses partnerships and relationships. Enjoy!
Birthdate of: Angela Bassett, actress; Madonna, singer; T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), adventurer/writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Conversations with children will be delightful today. In your private life, romance is sweet. It's easy to express your affection for others.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a lovely day to entertain family, or to enjoy domestic conversations, especially with parents. If there has been difficulty with someone, now is the day to pave the way.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today you'll discover how much love there is in your daily life. Your appreciation of the beauty in your everyday world is heightened. ("Oh Auntie Em, there's no place like home!")

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your ideas can make you money today. Or perhaps your ability to communicate through sales, marketing, writing and teaching will boost your income.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You find it easy to express your affection for others today because you feel true affection for them. It's easy to be kind and thoughtful to people today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're plugged into the ether today. You see patterns in the universe, in countries, governments and people, right down to the family level. What insight!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Get out and schmooze with friends and groups. You'll enjoy the company of others. Call someone up for lunch, coffee or a drink. Chat over the balcony.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Bosses, parents, teachers and VIPs are impressed with your ideas. You sound smart and smooth! Speak up, because you might get a raise or praise—or both.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Today your appreciation of beauty, poetry, literature and music is stimulated. You'll appreciate the crafts of other cultures. Ideas turn you on. You'll see patterns and an interconnectedness that you hadn't noticed before.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is an excellent day to sit down with others and discuss shared possessions, other people's wealth, the responsibilities you have for others or how to come to agree on differing values.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't hesitate to talk about important things in your closest friendships and partnerships today. It's easy to establish a nice give-and-take. People are willing to listen.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Co-workers are helpful today. Now is the time to push through projects you want to introduce. You're like a hot knife cutting through butter.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		3				9		
1			5	4				8
2								3
				7			2	
	8			9			4	
	5			1				
6								9
7				2	4			6
		4				5		

Difficulty Level ★★★
8/16

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	4	7	5	3	8	6	2	9
3	6	9	2	7	1	4	5	8
2	5	8	6	4	9	3	7	1
9	3	5	8	6	7	1	4	2
8	7	2	4	1	5	9	3	6
6	1	4	3	9	2	5	8	7
7	2	6	1	5	3	8	9	4
5	8	1	9	2	4	7	6	3
4	9	3	7	8	6	2	1	5

Difficulty Level ★★★
8/13

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

Soup is for the soul

DOWN AND OUT WITH THE flu for three days, the last thing I wanted to think about was food.

Knocked out by a combination of *hilot* and Western medicine on the first day, I did not feel hunger pangs the next day when I managed to open my eyes. But my cook knows that when someone's sick, you always make soup.

So it was *sinigang* for lunch. I managed to take two sips, but felt my throat react to the harsh, acidic broth. Then it was back to sleep again.

In the evening, there was *arroz caldo*. Again, two sips of the broth and that was it.

In my wakeful minutes, I thought of soup. Not from hunger but for something better to think about than my sorry state and that of the world as seen on television.

Soup was my introduction to an essay on Iloilo food. One of my interviewees on a second, more intensive research trip took issue with that.

Rafael Jardeleza of Mundo, a restaurant by the Iloilo city river, said *pancit molo* and *batchoy* shouldn't be what came to mind when thinking of Iloilo cooking.

Those are Chinese, he said. Though he didn't mention anything, after going through the cuisine for several weeks in several towns and restaurants, I realized what he meant.

True Iloilo soup

Over at one of his tables was *binacol*. It's sliced native chicken, nothing but, mixed with *buko* water and strips and cooked inside a bamboo tube. The top is sealed with banana leaves then the upright bamboo is placed on a bed of charcoal.

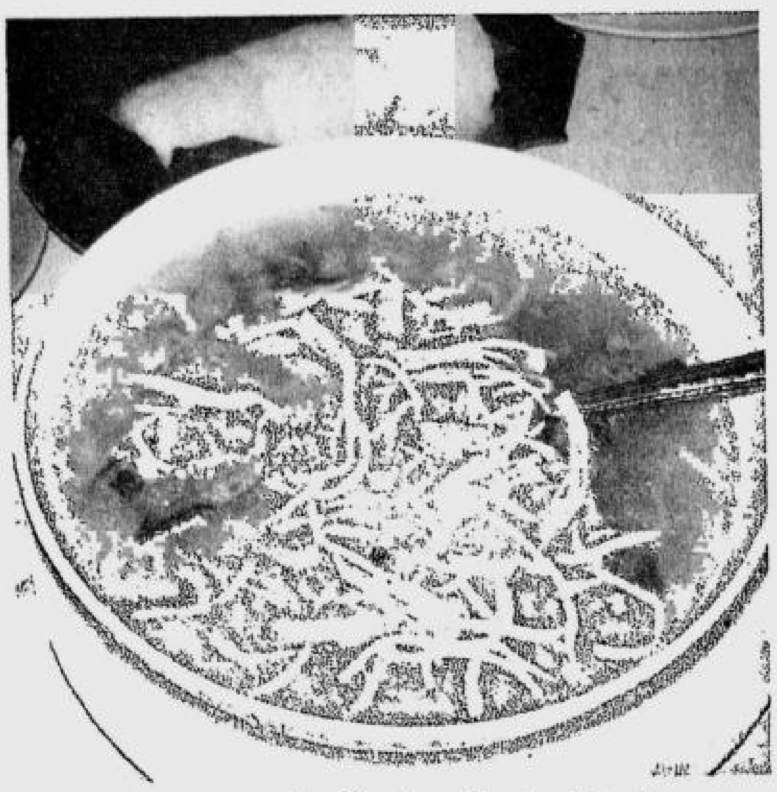
Binacol can also be cooked in a coconut shell but for most people, there is nothing that can duplicate the aroma of bamboo. Some people told me, however, that adding fresh bamboo sprouts is even better. So that set me thinking. Was *binacol* what Jardeleza was talking about? Its presence could be a not-so-subtle hint.

It was only when winding up my research that I realized how soups formed a big part of the Iloilo menu. I took some comfort in that because I was right to say that soups came to mind.

It was just that they should not only be *pancit molo* and *batchoy*. But I include those again because any food, no matter its provenance, becomes ours when we make it so.

Festival for a soup

My culinary guides brought me to Cabatuan town to taste *tinu-om na manok*. Apparently, the dish made the town famous. There is even a festival featuring their favorite chicken soup.



DECO'S batchoy—an order of batchoy with puto at Deco's

Tinu-om means to cook in banana leaf, so *tinu-om na manok* is chicken cooked in banana parcels. There's much more to the exercise, however.

The one tasked to show me how it was done was the town's acknowledged *tinu-om* cook, Aurelio Sera. It's not his daily job but he will do it for officials who have to treat guests to the best the town has to offer. Of course, the town fiesta and the festival are when he's busiest.

Only the upper portions of the banana leaves can be used. There should be three leaves in all, arranged in layers so the soup can be held properly.

Watching Sera chop the chicken is like watching old cooks working in their haphazard fashion, each piece too small and, of course, bone splinters all around. It's what we hope the new generation of cooks will unlearn.

He distributes the chicken into several packets. Each packet will have water, ginger, onions, garlic, lemon grass, potato and a bit of margarine or liquid seasoning. The edges of the banana leaves are then gathered and tied with a strip of banana leaf. The cooking involves steaming.

While the dish was cooking, we left briefly to look at the only *tinu-om* restaurant in town. Leah's is a small shack where people order their daily dose of chicken soup. One order is good for two if you take it with one of the dishes displayed in the *escaparate* (glass case) such as grilled squid.

TINU-OM—Leah's *tinu-om na manok*

The packet is lifted out of the steamer and placed in a clay pot. With a pair of scissors, the cook cuts the leaves just under the strip that ties them together. When it opens up, the steam and the aroma from the lemon grass are so welcoming. It is clean tasting with just the right balance of flavors.

We went back to Sera's version. It had a slightly different flavor but only just so. We thought it was the margarine added.

Perhaps the strangest soup is the *linagpang*. The recipe is simple. Charcoal-broiled chicken or fish and banana leaf-wrapped *guinamos* or shrimp paste.

The chicken is then shredded, the fish de-boned then placed in a bowl. The *guinamos* is unwrapped and placed with the main ingredient. Sliced tomatoes and onions are added. Chopped *siling labuyo* is next. Now this is the surprise. Boiling water is added to all that.

Students of cooking would think that broth, at least, should be added. But no, it's just water. When we had it at Ruth Padilla's place, it was invigorating and good.

Boiled water is also poured over chopped pork tenderloin with slices of ginger and scallions to make *bas-oy*.

There are so many more soups in Iloilo to write about. But those that came to mind while I was flat on my back helped me regain a little bit of appetite. Soup, indeed, is for the soul.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

THE CONSUMER

Another case of 'ningas-kugon'?

By Linda B. Bolido

IS THE CAMPAIGN OF THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas to promote the use of coins over? Or are we running short of coins again?

I was at Landmark Department Store last Saturday and, because of the value-added tax, I should have received something like P75.73 in change.

The cashier only handed me P75.50, which meant that, in addition to whatever markup they had already made on the item I bought, they got an additional 23 centavos from me, which was not part of the original price.

The logical thing for them to do, of course, if they did not have 23 centavos—or even just 20—was to give me 75 centavos rather than 50. But an ordinary cashier will not make that decision.

After all, at the end of the day, she will have to make up for the difference. Unless management instructs them to do that kind of adjustment, no cashier will want to pay out of her own pocket any shortfall in collection.

I usually demand to get the additional change and often get it—though grudgingly. But I was just too tired and too much in a hurry last Saturday to do so.

At any rate, customers should not have to do that—demand their exact change. They should be spared that aggravation.

Establishments should consider it their responsibility to provide exact change, or as close to it as possible.

If the BSP or a store does not have the coins to allow for exact change, then let us drop the pretense and stop listing prices with those extra centavos.

Feedback

Maricar Abis wants to express her appreciation to the staff of Mercury Drug-TriNoma "for immediately attending to my father who needed emergency medical attention last July 27.

"I would like to specifically thank the guard, Kuya Romy; branch manager Ms Cristy; and staff Arman and Paul.

"Their help compensated for the disappointment I felt when I learned that TriNoma did not have a clinic that could administer first aid especially for senior citizens."

Eufemia C. Estrada is all praises for the way the staff of Unimart Supermarket in Greenhills, San Juan, treats senior citizens. She said Jinky, Benjie, Ryan, and another gentleman quickly and efficiently handled transactions involving senior citizens, giving them the discounts they were entitled to, "no hassle, easy as pie."

She added that this was "unlike other supermarkets where only one cashier is designated to attend to senior citizens on certain days, at certain hours."

Tips

Joey Green, in his book "Gardening Magic," says you can prolong the life of cut flowers in a vase by adding two Alka-Seltzer tablets for every quart of water.

Floral arrangements can be preserved by spraying Aqua Net Hair Spray on baby's breath, broom grass and cattails. This will help preserve blossoms and keep them from dropping off.

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph

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Chow down some chowder

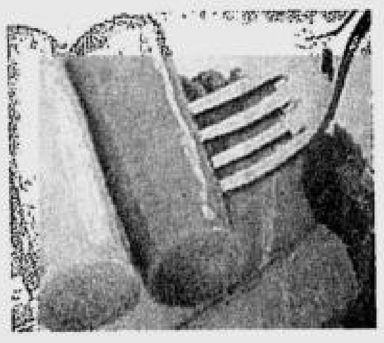
SINIGANG. TINOLA. NILAGA. When we Filipinos say "*sabaw,*" these are the dishes that immediately come to mind. But there are other soups and stews out there—from bisques to minestrones to chowders.

Chowders are usually thick soups made from milk and cream. Most chowders also have meat—seafood, pork, beef or poultry.

Here is a recipe to try, courtesy of Swift Vienna Sausage:

Vienna Bean Chowder

1 small carrot, diced
1 tbsp Butterfresh Margarine, melted
1 tbsp onion, minced
1 tbsp green bell pepper, minced
1 tbsp flour
1 c Selecta Fortified Filled Milk
1 can Pork & Beans (small)
1 70 g Swift Vienna Sausage, chopped fine
Salt and pepper to taste



Cook the carrots in an inch of boiling salted water. Drain but keep the broth. Saute the onion and green bell pepper in melted butter. Set aside. Add enough water to carrot broth to make 1 cup. Combine with milk. Stir the flour into the onion and pepper mixture in a skillet and stir constantly. Heat the mixture over low fire until desired consistency. Add carrots, beans and Swift Vienna Sausage. Season with salt and pepper for desired taste. Heat while stirring constantly for a few minutes or until cooked. Makes 3-4 servings.

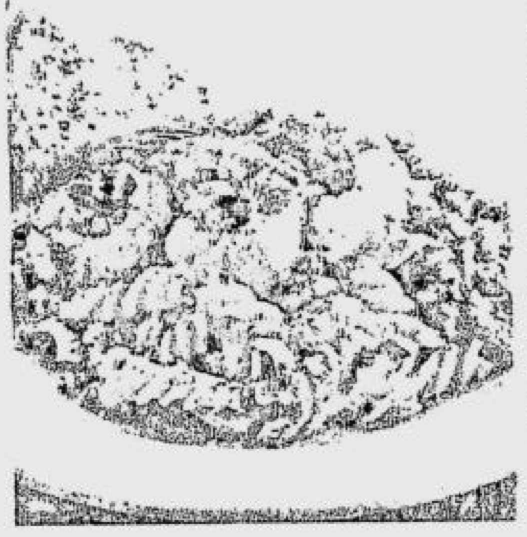
DINING OUT

3 is company

SUPER BOWL OF CHINA OUTLETS IN SM City San Lazaro, Roxas Boulevard cor. UN Avenue and SM San Fernando, Pampanga are conducting the "3 or More... Panalo!" promo. For only P120 per person, groups of three can have a set meal consisting of two main dishes. An order of Garlic Fried Rice, three glasses of iced tea or lemonade, and three pieces of Sesame Balls or Peanut Buchi for dessert will also be served. The promo is available for dine-in only. Prices are exclusive of applicable taxes. A 10-percent service charge will be added.

MELO'S, the restaurant that made Metro Manilans familiar with Certified Angus Beef Ribeye when it opened its first restaurant on Pasay Road in Makati, adds a contemporary feel to its dining tradition. Set up by Carmelo "Melo" Santiago, the restaurant is now being managed by his daughters who are trying to draw the new generation of steak lovers. Melo's now has three branches: Jupiter, Makati; Quezon City; and Westgate, Alabang. Aside from its signature dishes A-grade steak and ribeye, which is cut right in front of the guest, Melo's also offers lamb chop, oyster Rockefeller, salmon penne pasta, seabass, and wagyu and fillet of beef USDA steak, as well as different desserts.

HALFMOON AND I HAVE TWO EGGS, the two new restaurants on Morato Avenue in Quezon City, are becoming favorite destinations for foodies. Bestseller at Halfmoon, a pastry and dessert place, is Choco Cheese Bibingcrepe (a cross between the traditional *bibingka* and French crepe). I Have Two Eggs is a *tapsilog* station. Halfmoon has branches at SM Mall of Asia, SM North and the Block in Baguio.



THREE-COLORED PASTA
Pizza Hut Bistro is going decidedly classy. Modern tabletops, warm lighting and well-dressed waiters almost give the bistro the atmosphere and look of Italian fine dining. Even the menu includes gourmet pizzas, fresh salads and pastas like Veneto classic Pasta alla Vongole or the Spicy Tricolore, fusilli in three colors with spinach, chili flakes and creamy tomato sauce (421-1836, text (0917-8EWCITY). The Pizza Hut Bistro Eastwood branch is at City Walk 1 in Libis, Quezon City.

HYATT Hotel and Casino's The Fireplace features Foie Gras until Aug. 31. Dishes include Terrine of Rougie Goie Gras with Sauternes Jelly, Chanterelle Salad and Brioche Melba Toast, Sauteed Goose Liver with Balsamic Glazed Strawberries and Organic Greens and the Roasted Rougie Duck Breast on Braised Red Cabbage with Seared Duck Liver in Orange Jus. Call 2451234.

MAKATI SHANGRI-LA HOTEL'S Inagiku presents "The Wonders of Tempura" until Aug. 18. Call 840-0884 or 813-8888 loc 7588 or 7599.

PALOMA (6/F of Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City, tel. 910-4096) offers traditional Spanish cuisine. A must-try is the Orange Pinenut Salad. Other favorite dishes are the Ostrich Salpicao, Cheese Triangles and Braised Quails, Cochinillo Frito with White Cheese, Grilled Freshwater Prawns Duet, among others.

COOKING CLASSES

Desserts & pizzas

THE REGGIE ASPIRAS SCHOOL of Culinary Arts is conducting the following classes:

Aug. 17—Some Of My Best Chocolate Desserts '07 (all new): Strawberry Shortcake with White Chocolate Truffle Centers, Sinfully Rich Chocolate Cake, My Favorite Carrot Cake with White Chocolate Frosting, Best Ever Cream Puffs, Old-fashioned Chocolate Cake with Caramel Centers, Decadent Chocolate Cake

Aug. 20—Authentic Paellas (all new): Learn all the secrets to making authentic Paellas—Valenciana, Marinara, Farmer's, Chorizo etc., six authentic Spanish restaurant recipes

Aug. 22—Pizza Workshop—Hands On (all new recipes): Thin & Thick Crust from the classics to the twisted; Learn all you need to know to make delicious pizza—12 variations; bonus—Chocolate Pizza

Call 928-9296, 927-3008 or 633-5162.

San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center shares basic know-how and tips on getting into the pizza business through Business Opportunities Series (BOS) II "All About Pizza," 1:30-4:30 p.m., Aug. 17, at Legazpi cor. Eagle Sts., Bo. Ugong, Pasig City.

Learn step-by-step tricks plus bonus recipes. Fee is P500. The cooking demonstration is being conducted in cooperation with Magnolia Food Service, Purefoods Hormel Food Service and San Miguel Mills Inc.

Visit www.mygreatfood.com. Call 632-2000, 671-9876 loc 2771 and 402.

Dorothy's Cooking School offers on Aug. 18 classes in concocting frozen desserts such as frozen chocolate brazo, layered mocha freeze and other easy-to-do recipes ideal for gift giving and for a home business.

Enhance your cake decorating skills at a two-day hands-on cake decorating workshop for the holidays on Aug. 21-22. Bar Cookies featuring the versatile brownie and many more bar favorites are scheduled on Aug. 25.

Call 721-7735 and 416-7968.

The culinary Jamie Bond

By Linda B. Bolido

MIRIAM WAS IN FULL throttle as she sailed into New York's Four Seasons with old friend Claudia in her wake.

She turned on the charm as she asked the maitre d' for a table though they did not have a booking. She was surprised and pleased that she and her friend were accommodated.

Miriam thought, "I may have reminded him of his mother. Perhaps the management of the Four Seasons occasionally amuses itself by lavishing attention on perfect strangers."

Whatever the reason, it was a remarkable feat. For one thing, Miriam had been dead for some time and for another, had "she" come in as herself, getting a table would not have been a problem even if the Four Seasons was bursting at the seams.

Miriam was the late mother of Ruth Reichl, the former restaurant critic of the venerable New York Times. And she was just one of the many disguises Reichl used as she vetted New York's restaurants for her newspaper.

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
Ruth Reichl
Garlic and Sapphires
THE SECRET LIFE OF A CRITIC IN DISGUISE
—THE WASHINGTON POST BOOK WORLD

Determined to even the playing field, so to speak, and avoid having her assessment colored by the attention a writer for one of the world's most influential newspapers will inevitably get when she showed up as herself, Reichl turned restaurant critiquing into a series of one-act plays with her playing different roles.

Reichl turned restaurant critiquing into a series of one-act plays with her playing different roles

Friends and colleagues helped her transform herself into different people. One of her disguises even proved to be a much more enjoyable dinner companion to her young son than the real Reichl.

In her search for the wig that would go best with whatever personality she had chosen, Reichl was often mistaken for a cancer patient. Her confession to one store keeper that she did not have cancer actually made her a less desirable customer in one place.

Looks matter

As chronicled in her book "Garlic and Sapphires: The Secret Life of a Critic in Disguise," Reichl learned what many ordinary restaurant patrons already knew—that how you looked and how you were dressed often affected the way you were treated in a dining establishment.

There was usually an ocean of difference between the way she was treated as a nondescript diner and as a reviewer of the Times.

While the Times writer would get choice spots and be offered items not on the menu, the unknown diner got a table near the kitchen door or something similar, where she was in the path of a continuous parade of waiters and busboys.

In the book, Reichl, who is now editor in chief of Gourmet magazine, makes the search for her next disguise and the creation of her new persona almost as interesting as her experience inside New York's famed or undiscovered restaurants.

During her six-year stint, she introduced both Times people and readers to some modest but distinctive eating places they would otherwise not have discovered.

Her efforts were not always well-received both in and outside the newspaper. Some readers felt reviewing the less famous places was almost a waste of time and valuable Times space.

One restaurant owner, who got a less than favorable review, tried to pressure the Times to come out with some kind of retraction—a more positive assessment—on the front page of the Dining section.

The editor in charge of the section calmly told the irate restaurateur "… we simply don't operate like that."

"Garlic and Sapphires," a NYT bestseller, is as informative as it is fun reading.

And Reichl is one restaurant critic who really cooks. So her book not only includes some of her reviews but also her own recipes.

"Garlic and Sapphires: The Secret Life of a Critic in Disguise" (2005, Penguin Books) is available at Bestsellers book store, 4/F Robinsons Galleria.

Edible trinkets for first birthday

From page C1

Instead I asked the beautiful and competent obstetrician-gynecologist Ching Ilao Oreta to give you some guidelines, of course, under the supervision of your wife's attending physician.

Guidelines

Admittedly, says Dr. Oreta, gestational diabetes is one of the hardest to control.

Here are some of her tips that hopefully will make Mrs. Marlo's life a bit more tolerable.

Consumption: average 30 kilocalories per kilo per day—based on pre-pregnant weight for non-obese women.

There is a 33-percent caloric restriction from the normal allotted calorie consumption per day in obese women.

Blood sugar levels tend to rise when pregnant. So, even if you eat the same amount of food as you had during pre-pregnancy, the same intake causes a rise in blood sugar levels.

- Follow a low-carb, high-protein diet. Try the South Beach diet. Phase 1 would be ideal but might be a bit difficult for her to follow so Phase 2 might be a better option as it allows for some carbs.
- Eat vegetables and meat but take it easy on fruits.
- Take lots of water.
- Splenda or artificial sweeteners are better than sugar.
- Exercise.
- Monitor blood sugar religiously.

E-mail the author at raspiras @inquirer.com.ph

H E N Y S I S O N
CULINARY SCHOOL

THE ESSENTIAL COOKING SERIES: This 20-day hands on class is our innovative way of teaching the basics of cooking & baking. This program is for anyone who wants to work towards becoming a professional chef. Class begins September 5 – November 17, 2007. Classes are held every Wednesday & Friday from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

THE ESSENTIAL BAKING & PASTRY SERIES. This 20- day hands-on class will cover the basics of pastry, desserts, bread baking as well as cake decorating. It is suitable for those seeking an entry-level position in pastry shop, hotel or restaurants. Classes begin on September 5 – November 17, 2007. Classes are held every Tuesday & Thursday from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Tuition fee includes ingredients, manual, aprons, chef's jacket and chef's kit.
For more information call 726-5316 or 412 7792 and ask Rita or Jenny

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

September 1(Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) BARBECUE WORKSHOP WITH DIPS AND SAUCES by: Chef Sam de Leoz *Spicy Buffalo Wings w/ Blue Cheese Dip & Celery Sticks, Famous Aling N2 Barbecue w/ Melitzanosalata (Spicy Aubergine Dip), Indonesian Mixed Satay: Mixed Beef & Lamb w/ Sambal Kacang (Peanut Sauce), Yakitori w/ Mango Black Bean Salsa, Grilled Seafood Medley: Prawns, Scallops & Fish Fillet w/ Mustard – Dill Vinaigrette, Grilled Sausage w/ Cilantro Aioli Dip, Amorgozo (Ampalaya) & Smoked Fish Morsels w/ Cottage Cheese & Garlic Crunch Dressing, Java Rice P2,000

September 3(Monday)9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.(classroom A) BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Heny Sison *Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing P1,500

September 3(Monday)2:30 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) BROWNIES & BARS by: Heny Sison * Chewy Moist Brownies, Carrot Cake Bars with Cream Cheese Icing, Lemon Cheesecake Bars, Brownies with Caramel Center & Butterscotch Bars P1,500

September 3 (Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) SIOPAO & MAMI WORKSHOP by: Chef Katherine Sion * Chicken Bola-Bola, Asado Pao, Bola-bola Pao, Jumbo Siopao with Chinese Sausage, Chicken Asado Mami & Beef Mami P2,500

September 4-5 (Tuesday – Wednesday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) CAKE DECORATING COURSE I by: Heny Sison *Learn the basics of cake decorating: icing, color, star, shell, dots, outline and scallop borders; the rose, figure piping: clowns & booties. Each student will bake & decorate a character birthday cake. Full participation. P4,000

September 4 (Tuesday)9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.(classroom B) NEW CLASS ! BEST OF THE BEST BAKERY TREATS by: Chef Vicki Villanueva * Ensaymada, Maple Pecan Sticky Buns, Pandesal, Cheese Rolls Raisin Bread, Chocolate Marble with Almonds P2,050

September 6(Thursday)10:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) COFFEE CLASS by: Chef Aileen Anastacio *Caffé Latte, Caffé Mocha, Caffé Americano, Cappuccino, Espresso Macchiato & Espresso Con Panna, Almond Coffee Freeze, Icy Rum Coffee Cream, Toffee Coffee, Mudslide Malt, Mocha Rumba, Rocky Road and more! P3,000

September 7(Friday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE COOKING by: Chef Koichi Kondo * Sushi, Sashimi, Sukiyaki, Miso Soup, Tempura, Teriyaki, Udon Noodles in Clay Pot, Chicken Teriyaki & Japanese Fried Rice P2,500

September 8(Saturday)9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.(classroom A) MUFFIN WORKSHOP by: Jacqueline H. Alleje Recipes: Banana Yogurt Muffin, Chocolate-Ricotta Muffin, Spicy Raisin Muffin, Cocoa-Nut-Oatmeal Muffin, Sweet Potato-Walnut Muffin, Parmesan-Tomato Muffin, Chocolate-Cinnamon Muffin, and Low Fat Muffins: Herbed Brown Rice, Carrot-Orange and Raisin Bran Muffin. Students may assist in the preparation of the muffins. P1,500

September 8(Saturday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) NEW CLASS ! EUROPEAN SWEET AND SAVORY TARTS by: Jacqueline H. AllejeRecipes: French Lemon and Cheese Tarte, Swiss Onion Tarte, Classic Quiche Lorraine and Spinach Ricotta Quiche, Italian Ricotta Tarte and Chocolate Tarte and Apple Tarte P1,700

September 10(Monday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) NEW CLASS ! CHOCOLATE INDULGENCE by: Carrie Madrid * Chocolate Molten Cake, Chocolate Torte with Coffee Sauce, Triple Layer Brownie, Chocolate Tiramisu, Decadent White Chocolate Mousse and Coffee Panna Cotta with Chocolate Sauce P1,650

September 10(Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) NEW CLASS ! DIMSUM BAR by: Chef Katherine Sion * Vegan Siomai, Pork Siomai, Seafood Siomai, Stir Fried Egg Noodle with 3 Mushroom, Dynamite Noodle Soup, Cuapao, Vegan Cuapao and Kathy's Lumpia P2,500

September 11(Tuesday)9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.(classroom A) CHRISTMAS GIVE AWAY I by: Chef Vicki Villanueva *The Best Chocolate Cookie, Black Forest Bars, Choconut Crumble Bars, No Bake Brownies, Flourless Brownie and Brownie Christmas Pudding P1,950

September 11(Tuesday)1:30 – 5:30 p.m.(classroom A) CHRISTMAS GIVE AWAY II by: Chef Vicki Villanueva *My Best Liver Pate, Eggplant Caviar, Smoked Tinapa Spread, Puttanesca Sauce, Black & White Sesame Grissini, Garlic Sticks, Melba Toast U.S. Granular Potato Crackers, Bottled Tuyo w/ Capers and Nougatine, Peanut Brittle, Violet Crumble P1,800

September 12 (Wednesday)10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.(classroom A) THE MANY WAYS TO COOK CHICKEN by: Chef Aileen Anastacio *Citrus-Ginger Grilled Chicken, Chicken Cacciatore, Chicken Inasal, Thai Style Grilled Chicken, Roasted Chicken with Lemon, Garlic and Rosemary, Buffalo Wings and Chicken Bulgogi P1,800

September 13(Thursday)9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.(classroom A) NEW CLASS ! DESIGNER CAKES by: Chef Vicki Villanueva * Crème Brulee Cake, Chocolate Honey Crunch Cake, Mango & Chocolate Walnut Torte, Cappuccino Cake, Crema de Fruta Meringue Roulade and Samba Dome Cake P2,850

September 14(Friday)9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.(classroom A) OYSTER FESTIVAL by: Chef Vivian Syyap *Oyster Cajun Shots, Poached Oysters in Wine, Baked Oyster with Pesto Cream, Oyster Rockefeller and Batter-Fried Oyster with Lemons. Please reserve 3 days before P2,000

September 14(Friday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) MORE THAN JUST PIZZA ! by: Chef Vivian Syyap *Foccacia: Focaccia with Onions, Focaccia with Rosemary Focaccia with Olives. Sicilian Calzone: Eggplant, Black Olives, Capers, Pecorino, & Mozzarella. Panzeroti: Fried Pizza Pastries a la "Hot Pockets" Stromboli: Pepperoni, Salami and Provolone. Please reserve 3 days before P2,000

September 15(Saturday)9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon(classroom A) HEALTHY GOURMET - SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE 1 by: Jacqueline H. Alleje *This class is suitable for all people who want to be able to cook healthy dishes, lose weight considerably and people with health concerns such as diabetes, high blood pressure and other dietary restrictions. The class will guide you through the principles of healthy nutrition, South Beach Diet phase 1 "Swiss Pinoy Style", which uses locally available ingredients. Complete menu plan and recipes for 14 days of Phase 1. P1,650 plus P700 recipe booklet for Phase 1

September 15(Saturday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) HEALTHY GOURMET – SOUTH BEACH DIET COMBO CLASS PHASE 2 and 3by: Jacqueline H. Alleje *This class is suitable for all people who want to learn how to cook healthy dishes, deepen their knowledge of nutrition and weight control, as well as people with health concerns, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and other dietary restrictions. This class teaches wholesome recipes which reintroduce carbohydrates with complete recipe booklets for phase 2 and 3 of the South Beach Diet. P1,650 plus P700 per recipe booklet

September 17(Monday)9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) SECRETS NO MORE ! by: Heny Sison *Decadent Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing & Caramel Sauce, Lemon Torte, Ensaymada, Almond Sanzrival, Strawberry Shortcake & Ube Cake P3,000

September 17(Monday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom B) BAKED PASTAS by: Chef Aileen AnastacioRecipes: Beef Lasagna, Vegetable Lasagna, Chicken Macaroni, Baked Spaghetti and Baked Seafood Pasta P1,800

September 17(Monday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom B) BAKED PASTAS II by: Chef Aileen Anastacio *Spinach, Ricotta and Mushroom Canneloni, Meat Canneloni with 2 Cheese, Baked Ham, Broccoli and Cheese Fusili, Seafood Lasagne & Sundried Tomato and Eggplant Lasagne P1,800

September 18(Tuesday)9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.(classroom A) HOUSE OF FRUITCAKE by: Chef Vicki Villanueva Recipes Include: Graham Fruitcake, My Moms Fruitcake with Brandy Sauce, French Fruit Cake, White Fruit Cake, Chocolate Fruitcake with Sugar Glaze and Cream Cheese Fruitcake and Fruit Cake Bar Reservation Is Requested! P2,950

September 19 (Wednesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) NEW CLASS ! CHINESE SEAFOOD ! by: Chef Katherine Sion * Winter Melon with 8 Treasure Soup, Steamed Fish Fillet Taiwan Style, Fried Prawns with Sweet and Chili Sauce, Scallops with Fresh Asparagus, Crab with Sotanghon, Manila Clams with Tausi Sauce and Fried Rice with Twin Flavor. Reservation Is Requested! P2,000

September 20(Thursday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) NEW CLASS ! MY FAVORITE MERINGUE by: Chef Jacqueline Ang-Po *Canonigo with Creme Anglaise, Hazelnut Sansrival, Strawberry Pavlova, Chocolate Concorde, Mango Walnut Meringue and Flavored Colorful Meringue. P1,800

September 21(Friday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) SPECIAL TABLE AND HOME DECOR FLOWER ARRANGEMENT by: Glenn Remorca Table Centerpieces w/ actual demonstration and table setting presentation Lecture, demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P3,000

September 22(Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) RAINY DAYS AND MONDAYS COMFORT SOUPS, STEWS, AND CASSEROLES by: Chef Sam de Leoz Recipes: Prawn Bisque, Hungarian Goulash, Balbacua, Ossobuco Alla Milanese, Risotto Al Funghi, Beef Pares and Sopa de Marisco Demonstration with student participation. P1,950

September 24(Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) KOREAN COOKING I by: Chef Cecile Park *Beef Bulgogi (Tenderloin & ordinary), Chicken Bulgogi, Pork Bulgogi, Chap Chae, Mi Yuk Guk (Soups: Seaweeds, Beef or Tahong), Bibimbap & Kalbi Jim P2,500

September 24(Monday)9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.(classroom B) JAPANESE RICE TOPPINGS by: Chef Koichi Kondo *Oyako-don (Chicken & Egg on Rice), Gyudon (Beef Bowl), Tendon (Tempura Bowl), Katsu-don (Pork Cutlet Bowl), Soboro-don (Minced Chicken & Egg Bowl), Tori Teriyaki-don (Chicken Teriyaki) P1,700

September 24(Monday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom B) SUSHI CLASS by: Chef Koichi Kondo *Temaki-Zushi (Do-it Yourself Sushi Rolls), Bara-Zushi (Scattered Sushi), Inari-Zushi (Sushi Pockets), Futo-Maki Zushi (Thick-Rolled Sushi), Teka-Maki (Hand-rolled Tuna Sushi), Kappa-Maki (Sea Cucumber Sushi) and California Maki P1,700

September 25(Tuesday)9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) ARTISAN BREAD BAKING by: Jacqueline Alleje Recipes: Whole Wheat Sandwich Bread, Yogurt Graham, Herb-Onion-Bacon Bread, Yogurt Graham Bread, Bread Sticks, Focaccia, Whole Wheat Swiss Quark, Raisin Bread and Mango Tea Bread P2,500

September 26 (Wednesday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) NEW CLASS! STINKING ROSE (For Garlic Lover) by: Carrie Madrid* Roasted Garlic Dip, Cream Cheese Garlic Spread, Roasted Garlic Stuffed Mushroom, Chicken with Forty Cloves of Garlic, Fried Garlic Squid, Stir Fried Garlic Beef (Beef Salpicao), Alio I Olio Pasta and Sausage Garlic Linguini P1,600

September 27(Thursday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) SWEET BUT SUGAR FREE CAKES II by: Chef Jacqueline Ang-Po * Cappuccino Tiramisu, Oatmeal Chip Cookie, Almond Sansrival, Vanilla Pannacotta, Chocolate Mousse Cake, Fudge Macadamia Brownies P1,800

September 28 (Friday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) NEW CLASS! CATERING II (Filipino Dessert Bar) by: Chef Vicki Villanueva * Galapong Bibingka, Puto Bumbong, Halo-Halo (Scratch), Sago at Gulaman, Cheesy Cassava, Tsokolate Ehl, Pandan Macapuno Ube and Flat Hopia P2,950

September 29(Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) A TASTE OF CURRY I by: Chef Sam de Leoz Recipes: Spicy Dal, Curry Vegetable Spring Rolls, Chicken Vindaloo, Penang Duck Curry, Thai Red Curry Shrimp, Beef Rendang and Pineapple Curry Rice P1,950

HENY SISON MAKATI (Waltermart)

September 17(Monday)10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS ! FLORAL CHRISTMAS DECORATION by: Glenn Remorca Dress up your Holiday tables this Christmas with new and innovative designs using fresh flowers and an assortment of accessories ! Demo class only. Hand outs/guide and Sourcing of materials to be given out. P3,000

September 18-19(Tuesday-Wednesday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. CAKE DECORATING COURSE I by: Heny Sison *Learn the basics of cake decorating: icing, color, star, shell dots, outline and scallop borders, the rose, figure piping: clowns & booties Each student will bake & decorate a character birthday cake. Full participation. P4,000

September 20-21(Thursday-Friday)9:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m. CAKE DECORATING COURSE II by: Heny Sison *Add amazing new skills to your cake decorating – the world of icing flowers, distinctive borders, flower spray & specialty flowers. As a final project you will decorate a basketweave cake filled with cascading flower. Full participation. P4,000

September 22(Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS ! CHRISTMAS PACKAGING IDEAS by: Glenn Remorca Learn how to make unique wrappers and packaging for you holiday goodies using an assortment of materials locally available. Do your own paper wrappers, prints and accessories for home and business use. Full participation. P2,500

September 26(Wednesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. MEAT PROCESSING I by: Chef Vicki Villanueva Apply the new concepts, principles and techniques of making a longanisa, chorizo, tocino, corned beef, tapa, luncheon meat, embotido from scratch. The preparation of ice tea, atchara and flavored rice, and lunch is included. Reservation Is Requested! P2,800

September 27-28 (Thursday-Friday) NEW CLASS ! CHINESE BANQUET I by: Chef Katherine Sion *Assorted Hot/Cold Cuts: Ginger Sauce, Seaweeds & Century Eggs, Pork Cutlet & Baked Shrimp, Fish Lips Soup, 2 Kinds in a Platter (a) Chili Shrimp Ball with Asparagus Tips in Noodle Nest, (b)Fried Rolled Chicken with Nori & Salted Egg, Grilled Beef Rib Eye with Barbeque Spice and Baked Crab with 8 Spices, Steamed Fish with Ham Bits and Leeks, Cantonese Birthday Noodle, Yang Chow Fried Rice and Fruit Platter Reservation is Requested! Pls. bring your own apron. P4,900

September 29(Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS ! FLORAL TABLE CENTERPIECE by: Glenn Remorca Fresh floral table centerpieces to brighten up any party or event for your flower shop business or home use. Learn how to assemble and create them plus source the materials and apply the ropes of flower arranging all in one class! Materials to be provided for hands on, bring your scissors. P3,000

TUITION FEE includes ingredients. Reservation is required WEDDING & BIRTHDAY CAKE orders by appointment only. We sell Cake Decorating, Confectionary and Baking Supplies.
FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT OUR CLASSES,
RESERVATIONS & INQUIRIES
visit or call us at:33 Bonnie Serrano Avenue
(formerly Santolan Road) Crame, Quezon City
Telephone #: 726-5316 / 412-7792 E-mail: henysison@pacific.net.ph
Website: www.henysison.com

CALLING ALL ALUMNI

We have lined-up various activities for you in connection with the 20th Anniversary celebrations of the Heny Sison Culinary School which will coincide with the formal opening of our Makati branch.

Please register with us at the soonest possible time.
Contact Glenn, Rita or Jenny at tel. nos. 726-5316 or 412-7792 or thru Glenn's cp# 0917-9465402, or send in your latest resumé or personal contact info thru Telefax no. 412-7792 or email : henysison@pacific.net.ph

HUMMING SOON!

Our new branch in Makati will be opening soon, together with a café and a kitchen gallery retail store. We need Chef Instructors, Office & Kitchen Staff and Retail Sales Ladies. For more information, visit our website www.henysison.com or send your resumé to henysison@pacific.net.ph

Gold
FRESH MILK
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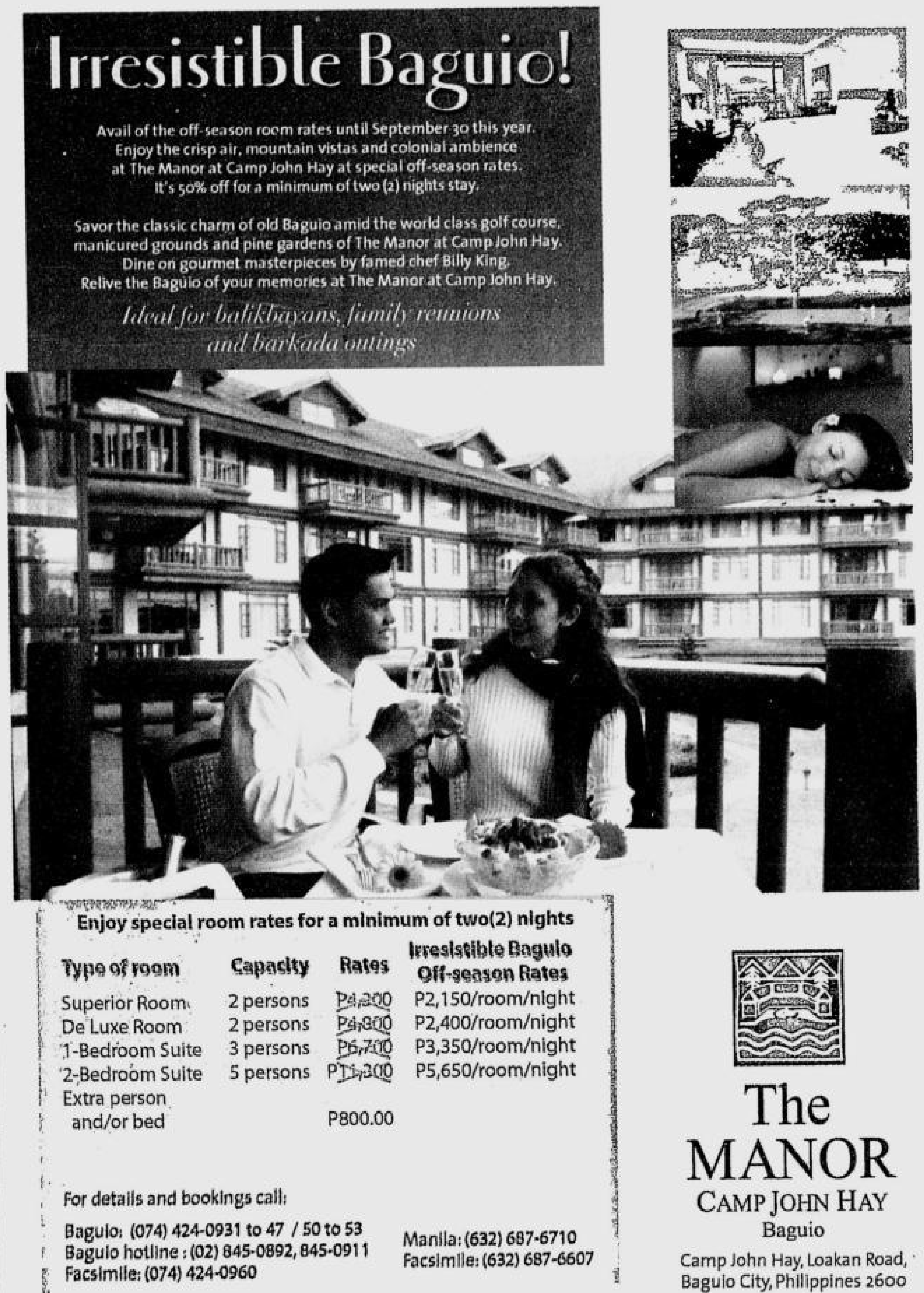
PRESTO • AVOSET GROUP



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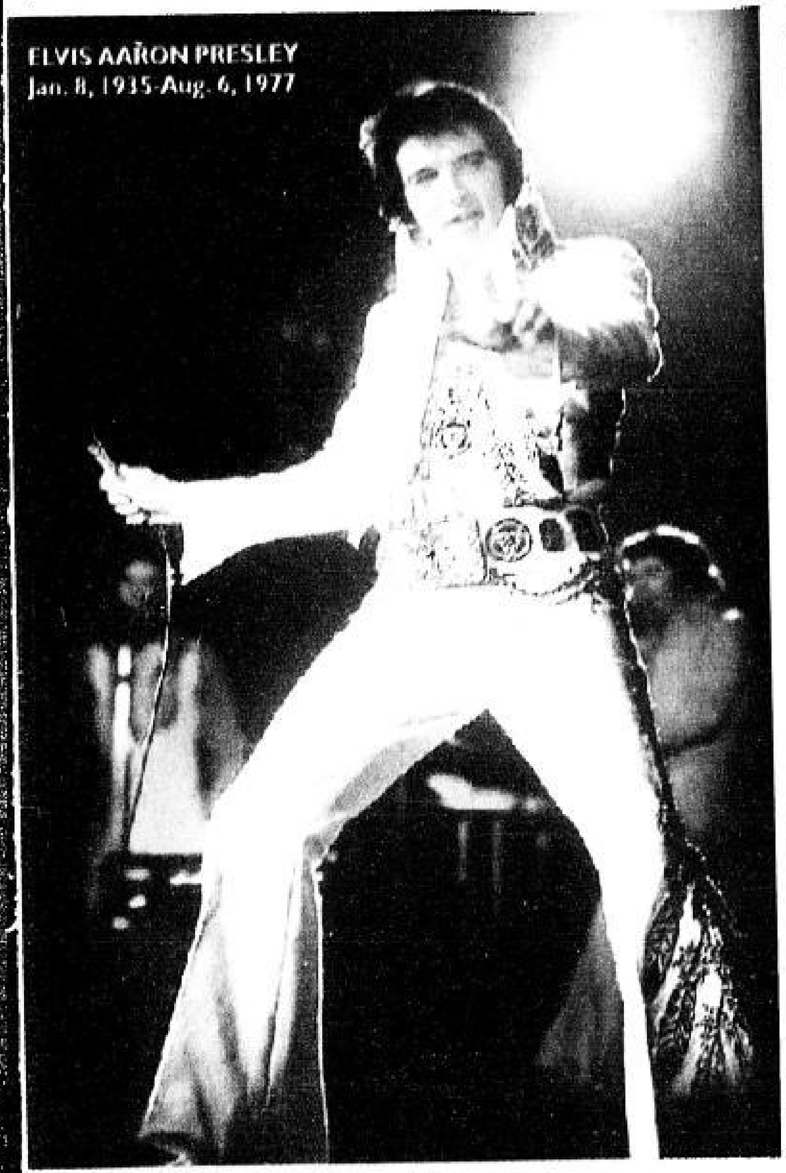
sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** entertainment


ELVIS AARON PRESLEY
Jan. 8, 1935-Aug. 6, 1977

'Before Elvis, there was nothing'

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE—Before Elvis, there was nothing, John Lennon once said.

A poor Southern white boy who brought black music into the mainstream, Elvis Presley made rock 'n' roll the international language of pop.

"He started it all; he was definitely the start of it for me," Elton John also said once.

But while he may have influenced generations of musicians, his iconic status does not carry the same kind of contemporary popularity as the Beatles or the Doors, whose songs get more airplay on traditional radio.

Classic

"Part of it is that there was the whole fat Las Vegas period and the bad movies," said James Henke, chief curator at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. "But I don't think you can underestimate how powerful his music has been."

Elvis scored a huge hit a few years back with a remix of "A Little Less Conversation," used in Nike's multimillion-dollar World Cup advertising campaign, but his estate has been reluctant to allow his music to be reworked.

"This is classic music, we don't want to get too trigger-happy," said Jack Soden, CEO of

'BEFORE/ D2

New body to assist outbound RP films

By Marinel R. Cruz

(First of two parts)

FILMMAKERS WHO GET invited to festivals abroad need no longer worry about funds for their trips.

They can now expect subsidy of up to P800,000 per trip from the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP).

FDCP chair Jacky Atienza said the council has formed a three-member Festival Committee (FC) "to assist the FDCP chair in giving local films exposure abroad, making them more globally competitive; help in their distribution; and support local film festivals."

The FC replaces the recently abolished International Film Festival Committee, formed to assist producers in subtitling and printing more copies of movies bound for film fests abroad.

"Requests for subsidies and grants have increased because of our digital films being invited to various festivals. We had to rationalize the process," Atienza said. "We also decided to upgrade the level of subsidies."

The FC has identified and classified international film fests. Movies that will compete in festivals in the first tier could get a grant of up to P800,000. Films for exhibition in

NEW/ D2

DONNY AND MARIE. Pop superstars Donny and Marie Osmond of the 1970s perform at the Orleans hotel-casino in Las Vegas, Nevada Aug. 13, 2007. The concert, taped over two days by Public Broadcasting Service and also starring Andy Williams—in whose show The Osmonds, a family band, debuted—will be broadcast in the US in March 2008. REUTERS

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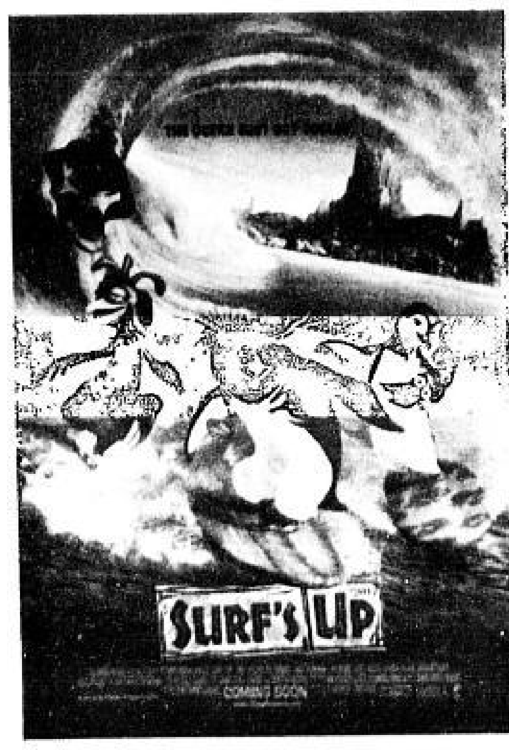
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*Games and Raffle
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Robinsons Pioneer Cinema Lobby
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4 SURF'S UP
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6 RUSH HOUR - 3
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8 OUIJA
9 RATATOUILLE
10 RISE

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
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3 SURFS UP
4 RESERVED

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Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
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2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 A LOVE STORY
5 RUSH HOUR - 3

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2 OUIJA
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2 SURSF UP

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4 A LOVE STORY

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4 SURF'S UP

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3 SURF'S UP
4 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
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6 RUSH HOUR 3
7 RATATOUILLE
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9 RUSH HOUR 3
10 OUIJA

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4 RISE
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6 OUIJA

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4 LICENSE to WED
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4 SURF'S UP
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6 LICENSE to WED

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5 BUG
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2 SURF'S UP
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 RUSH HOUR 3
5 OSS 117
6 CAPE KARMA

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*Dance Number *Meet & Greet / Photo Op with Cody
*Surfing Clinic by Stonemoney *Games and Raffle
Robinsons Metro East Mall Activity Area

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Boy Abunda a

MY BELOVED "SISTAH" BOY Abunda called me to shed more light about my item on Ai-Ai de las Alas being torn between the Kapuso and Kapamilya networks.

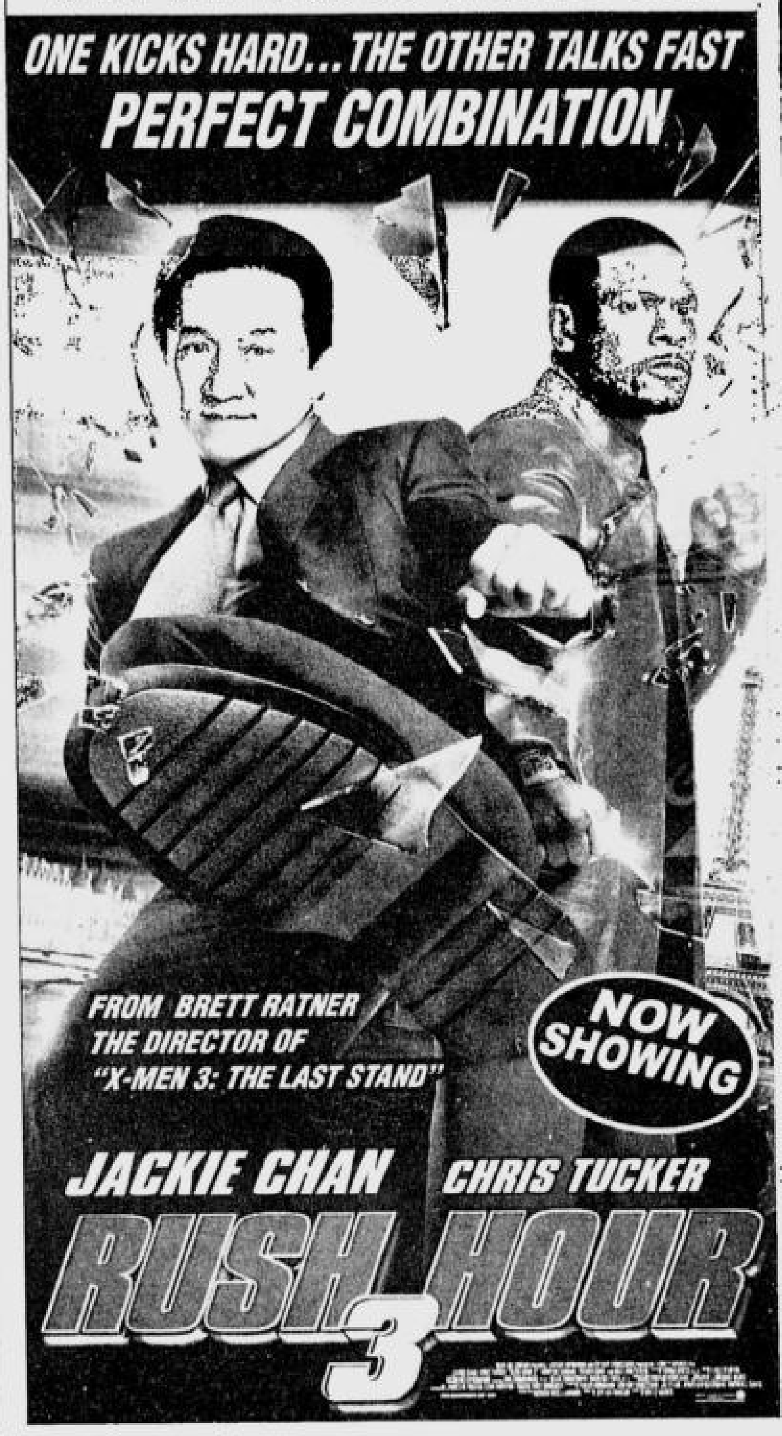
"I'd like to apologize to Ma'am Wilma Galvante for whatever inconvenience Ai-Ai may have caused her," Boy stated. "I know in my heart an no way did rate Ai-Ai fr

Boy is n and his ot He's never to be a friend."

Jomari's p

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

THE #1 MOVIE NATIONWIDE!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② RUSH HOUR 3
MTRCB PG-13
12:30, 2:50, 5:10

③ BOURNE ULTIMATUM
MTRCB PG-13
1:15, 4:00, 6:45, 9:30

④ SURF'S UP
MTRCB GP 1:05, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
A LOVE STORY
MTRCB PG-13
2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

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PG-13

2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
12:05, 2:40, 5:25, 8:30, 11:05
PG-13

3 SURF'S UP
1:00, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 8:50, 10:50
G

4 A LOVE STORY
12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:05
PG-13

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pologizes for Ai-Ai

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Ma'am Wilma try to pi-
m ABS-CBN."
t called "Ama" by Ai
er wards for nothing.
oo much of a TV icon
father, mother and

assion

Jomari Yllana has taken his passion for cars to another level. Last weekend, he opened his Rapide car service center in Bocaue, Bulacan (66A Gov F Halili Ave., 044-9200329). Does this signal serious plans for his future—like getting hitched again?

"I'd like to give marriage another try but not for now," Jom said. He's not on rapid mode when it comes to that. "I have to focus first on raising my son Andre."

I teased him. "Are you going to marry my best friend Pops?" He smiled. "I met my match in her. Wherever this may lead us, I'm sure I'll be spending the best time of my life with her."

If Pipay were a car, what model would she be? "Pipay is like a Rolls Royce Phantom. I had never before experienced the extreme luxury and comfort, as a passenger, that I have in that most glamorous sedan ever built!"

Doesn't Pops ever get jealous of the attention he gives his cars? "Not at all. I'm not like a guy who worships his car as if it were his girlfriend," Jom says, laughing. "I love cars but their purpose for me is for transport or motor sport only. I invest money in cars, not emotions. I treat them like ladies—I give them names like Amy, Rachel, Sophia and Eleonor..."

Amy and company only come second to Pipay in making Jom's heart race as they happily cruise love's highway.

Cold hosts

A "Wowowee" insider told me that Mariel Rodriguez and Valerie Concepcion are not too fond of each other.

"People are noticing how cold they are on cam, compared to when it was still Janelle and Roxanne co-hosting with Mariel. One of them was overheard saying, '*Di ko siya* type *ka-trabaho*.'"

I asked Mariel for her side. "News like that is no longer new to me," she says. "Even before, they say *nagplaplastikan lang kami ni* Janelle and Roxanne. I'm not a plastic person *naman*."

Since Valerie is a new addition to the show, maybe she and Mariel are still adjusting to each other's style.

Or are they left with no choice but to master the art of maximum tolerance?

Stage mom?

I bumped into Maricel and Anthony Pangilinan with their kids at Taal Lake Yacht Club. They were taking their Hungarian friends on a boat ride to Taal Volcano.

I kidded Maricel. "Aren't you turning into a stage mom now that your daughter has a TV ad with you?"

She chuckled and said, "During the shooting, I buckled more than Hannah did!"

Maricel's motherhood joy is so contagious and she spreads it around so well!

E-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com.

New body . . .

From page D1

those festivals could receive up to P600,000.

In the first tier are the festivals held in Cannes, France; Berlin, Germany; Venice, Italy; Toronto, Canada; Utah (Sundance) and New York (New Directors/New Films) in the US.

The Rotterdam, Locarno, Los Angeles/IFP, New York, Montreal, Telluride, Tribeca, Pusan, Tokyo and London international film festivals all belong to the second tier. A film invited to compete in any of these festivals could get up to P600,000 in subsidy. If it is up for exhibition, it could get as much as P400,000.

In the third tier are the San Sebastian, Seattle, Melbourne, Palm Springs, Bangkok, Deauville, Valladolid, Flanders, Sydney, Edinburgh, Karlovy Vary and South by Southwest international film fests.

Grants for films that fall in the third tier—both for competition and exhibition—are as much as P400,000.

"Films invited to participate in festivals that currently do not belong to any of the three tiers would be subject to the evaluation of the members of the FDCP board," Atienza told INQUIRER Entertainment on Monday.

(Tomorrow: The first recipients of subsidies from FDCP-FC.)

Before Elvis . . .

From page D1

Elvis Presley Enterprises.

An aggressive global marketing drive culminates in the celebration of the 30th anniversary of his death today. Expectations are high for sales of reissued CD box sets and "deluxe edition" DVD releases of Elvis films.

"A lot has been written and said about why he was so great, but I think the best way to appreciate his greatness is just to go back and play some of the old records," Huey Lewis has been quoted as saying. "Time has a way of being very unkind to old records, but Elvis' keep getting better and better." *AFP*

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RUSH HOUR 3 PG13 1:40,3:50,6:00, 8:10,10:20	BOURNE ULTIMATUM PG13 1:00,3:30,6:00,8:30	SURF'S UP G 1:00,3:00,5:00, 7:00,9:00
A LOVE STORY PG13 12:10,2:40,5:10, 7:40,10:10	SURF'S UP G 12:00,2:00,4:00, 6:00,8:00	BOURNE ULTIMATUM PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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CINEMA 4 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM 11:05 , 1:55 , 4:45 4:35 , 7:35 , 10:30 PG-13
CINEMA 5 RUSH HOUR 3 10:30, 12:35, 2:35 4:35 , 6:35 , 8:35 10:35 PG-13
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MUSIC MUSEUM	August 24 & 25 , 2007	Ogie Alcasid & Regine Velasquez	8:00 PM
	September 15 , 2007	Rico J. w/ Ruffa Mae	8:00 PM
TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS	Aug. 18, 24, 31, Sept. 7, 21 , 28 ,2007	Drag - Ons	10:00 PM
	Aug. 15, 22, 30, Sept. 5,12,19,26,2007	Cerrudo Classico	8:00 PM

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SM CINEMA movietime exclusive presents

BLADES OF GLORY
"Improbably Hilarious"
- The Wall Street Journal
"Fast, light, frequently funny comedy"
- The New York Times
"Puts a goofy smile on your face"
- The Hollywood Reporter

Blades of Glory is a comedic farce that takes on the world of figure skating. The film stars Will Ferrel (*Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*) as Chazz Michaels and Jon Heder (*Benchwarmers*) as Jimmy MacElroy, two competitive figure skaters who, banned from competing in the men's single competition a few years back, are convinced to compete in the pairs skating category - with each other!

Watch how Chazz and Jimmy pull it off and win the coveted championship exclusively at your favorite SM Cinemas nationwide.

MTRCB Rating: PG-13
Special Thanks to
NOW ON ITS 2ND WEEK

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
IMAX
HARRY POTTER 5 4:00PM 8:30PM
T-REX 2:30PM 7:00PM
ANT BULLY 12:30PM
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 SURF'S UP
3 BLADES OF GLORY
4 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
5 OUIJA
6 RISE
PREMIERE CINEMA
A LOVE STORY
CENTERSTAGE
RUSH HOUR 3
DIRECTOR'S CLUB
Bookings now accepted. Inquire at 556-2314.
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
BOURNE ULTIMATUM
CINEMA 2
A LOVE STORY
633-8976
For ticket reservation, dial 6338976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 RUSH HOUR 3
3 BLADES OF GLORY
4 A LOVE STORY
5 A LOVE STORY
6 SURF'S UP
7 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
8 RUSH HOUR 3
9 OUIJA
10 BLADES OF GLORY
11 RISE
12 A LOVE STORY

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 BLADES OF GLORY
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 RUSH HOUR 3
5 OUIJA
6 SURF'S UP
7 RATATOUILLE
8 RISE
9 A LOVE STORY
10 A LOVE STORY
11 SIMPSONS MOVIE
12 HARRY POTTER 5

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 RISE
2 A LOVE STORY
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 RUSH HOUR 3
5 RATATOUILLE
6 SURF'S UP
7 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
8 A LOVE STORY
9 OUIJA
10 HARRY POTTER 5
11 BLADES OF GLORY
12 SINKING OF JAPAN

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 RISE
3 A LOVE STORY
4 SURF'S UP
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 HARRY POTTER 5
7 BLADES OF GLORY
8 SIMPSONS MOVIE
9 OUIJA
10 RATATOUILLE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 RUSH HOUR 3
3 RISE
4 SURF'S UP
5 OUIJA
6 A LOVE STORY

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
5 BLADES OF GLORY
6 OUIJA
7 SURF'S UP
8 RISE
9 RATATOUILLE

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 RISE
3 A LOVE STORY
4 RUSH HOUR 3
5 SURF'S UP
6 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
7 THREE
8 BLADES OF GLORY
9 A LOVE STORY
10 OUIJA
11 HARRY POTTER 5
12 RATATOUILLE

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 RUSH HOUR 3
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 BOURNE ULTIMATUM

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 RUSH HOUR 3
3 A LOVE STORY
4 SURF'S UP

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 SURF'S UP
2 A LOVE STORY
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 BOURNE ULTIMATUM

movietime Fresh New Movie

From the creators of "Open Season" comes another animated movie about a teenage penguin and his dream of becoming a big wave in the world of surfing.

"Surf's Up" rides on the reality bandwagon, as it chronicles the life of a teenage penguin named Cody Maverick, from his humble beginnings atShiverpool, Antartica to his trip to Pen Gu Island for the much-anticipated Big Z Memorial Surf Off. There he meets personalities such as Sheboygan surfer Chicken Joe, promoter Reggie Belafonte, talent scout Mikey Abromowitz, and spirited lifeguard Lani Aliikai, who all believe in his great talent waiting to be developed.

Cody believes that the immense success will make him get everything he deserves, but this mentality changes when he meets a senior surfer along the way.

NOW SHOWING
SM CINEMA SM MALL OF ASIA CINEMAS THE PODIUM
MTRCB Rating: G (All Ages Admitted)
COLUMBIA PICTURES SONY PICTURES animation

LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 SURF'S UP
2 A LOVE STORY
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 RISE
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 A LOVE STORY
7 OUIJA
8 BOURNE ULTIMATUM

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 SURF'S UP
3 OUIJA
4 BLADES OF GLORY
5 A LOVE STORY
6 LICENSE TO WED

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 BLADES OF GLORY
2 A LOVE STORY
3 FRACTURE
4 SURF'S UP

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 OUIJA
2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
3 LICENSE TO WED
4 SURF'S UP
5 BLADES OF GLORY
6 A LOVE STORY

SM CIY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 SINKING OF JAPAN
2 BLADES OF GLORY
3 A LOVE STORY
4 SURF'S UP

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 A LOVE STORY
2 BLADES OF GLORY
3 FRACTURE
4 SURF'S UP

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 BLADES OF GLORY

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 LICENSE TO WED
3 SURF'S UP
4 A LOVE STORY

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 SURF'S UP
3 A LOVE STORY
4 OUIJA
5 BLADES OF GLORY
6 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 BLADES OF GLORY
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 RATATOUILLE
2 SURF'S UP
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 A LOVE STORY
5 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
6 BLADES OF GLORY
7 RESERVED
8 OSS 117

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 RUSH HOUR 3
2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
3 SURF'S UP
4 HARRY POTTER 5/ TRANSFORMERS
5 BLADES OF GLORY
6 OUIJA
7 A LOVE STORY
8 BOURNE ULTIMATUM

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 SURF'S UP

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

MTRCB RATING PG-13
The Comedy Event of the Year!
Exclusively Showing at SM CINEMAS
KICK SOME ICE
WILL FERRELL JON HEDER
BLADES OF GLORY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Araneta Center
aranetacenter.net

Gateway Ali MALL Farmers Plaza
gatewaymall.com.ph

Gateway Cineplex*10
WORLD-CLASS, STATE-OF-THE-ART MOVIE AT POPULAR PRICES
EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

BOURNE ULTIMATUM 12:00 / 2:30 / 5:00 / 7:30 / 10:00
A LOVE STORY 12:00 / 2:30/ 5:00 / 7:30 / 10:00
RISE 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45
SURFS UP 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00
RUSH HOUR 3 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50
THE SIMPSONS 2:50 / 7:25
RATATOUILLE 12:20 / 4:55 / 9:30
BOURNE ULTIMATUM 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

CINEMANILA SCREENING SCHEDULE

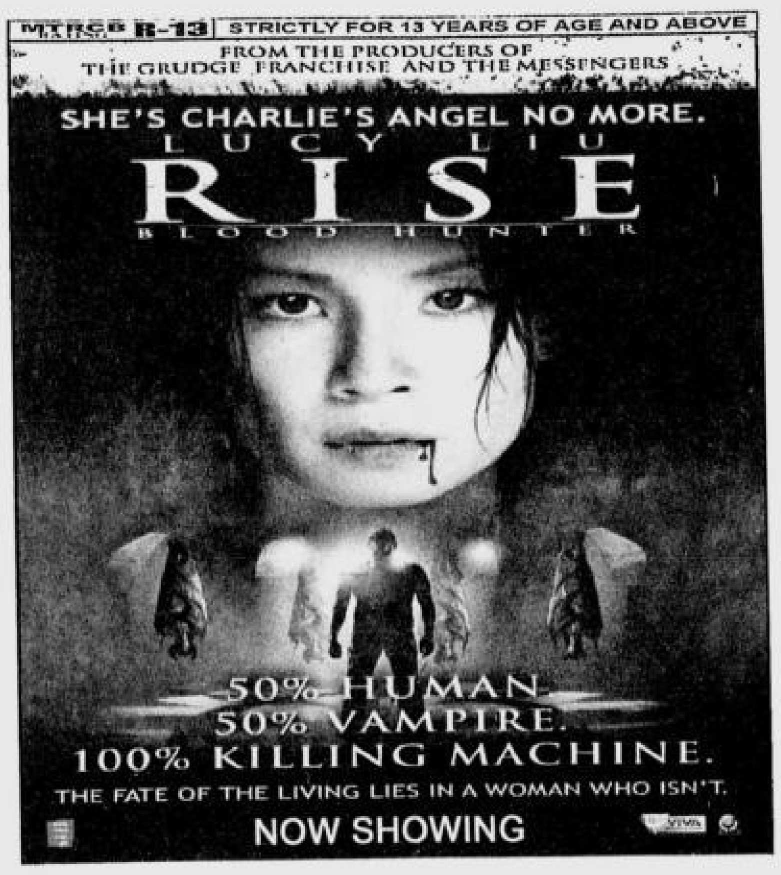
CINEMA 1
1:00 - 2:53 /4 MOS., 3 WKS & 2 DAYS
3:30 - 5:06 /2 DAYS IN PARIS
5:30 - 7:31 /VOLVER
8:00 - 9:53 4 /MOS., 3 WKS & 2 DAYS
10:30 - 12:05 /PERSEPOLIS

CINEMA 4
12:30 - 2:03 /THE NEAR EAST
2:30 - 4:20 /GETTING HOME
5:00 - 6:27 /SANKARA
7:00 - 9:01 /LOVE AND HONOR
9:30 - 11:05 /AUTOHYSTORIA

CINEMA 6
5:00 - 6:30 /BALIKBAYAN BOX
7:00 - 8:52 /KILL BILL Vol 1
9:30 - 11:46 /KILL BILL Vol 2

Ali MALL 5
1 RISE 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40
2 RUSH HOUR 3 12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05
4 OUIJA BOARD 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30
5 A LOVE STORY 1:15 / 3:45 / 6:15 / 8:45
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph


MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
FROM THE PRODUCERS OF THE GRUDGE FRANCHISE AND THE MESSENGERS
SHE'S CHARLIE'S ANGEL NO MORE.
LUCY LIU
RISE
BLOOD HUNTER
50% HUMAN.
50% VAMPIRE.
100% KILLING MACHINE.
THE FATE OF THE LIVING LIES IN A WOMAN WHO ISN'T.
NOW SHOWING

VAN HALEN REUNITES FOR TOUR Go ahead, jump! David Lee Roth, R, original lead singer of the rock group Van Halen, poses with band member Eddie Van Halen in Beverly Hills on Monday after a news conference announcing their reunion ... and a North American tour. Their first together in more than 20 years, the tour will kick off in Charlotte, North Carolina on Sept. 27. REUTERS

MTRCB RATING G FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE
God has a grand design...
Guess who has
to build it?
Steve CARELL Morgan FREEMAN
Evan ALMIGHTY
From the Director of BRUCE ALMIGHTY
A united international pictures release through Solar Entertainment Corporation
IN THEATERS AUG. 22

MATT DAMON IS JASON BOURNE
THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
NOW SHOWING
REMEMBER EVERYTHING.
FORGIVE NOTHING.

AT THE CINEMAS

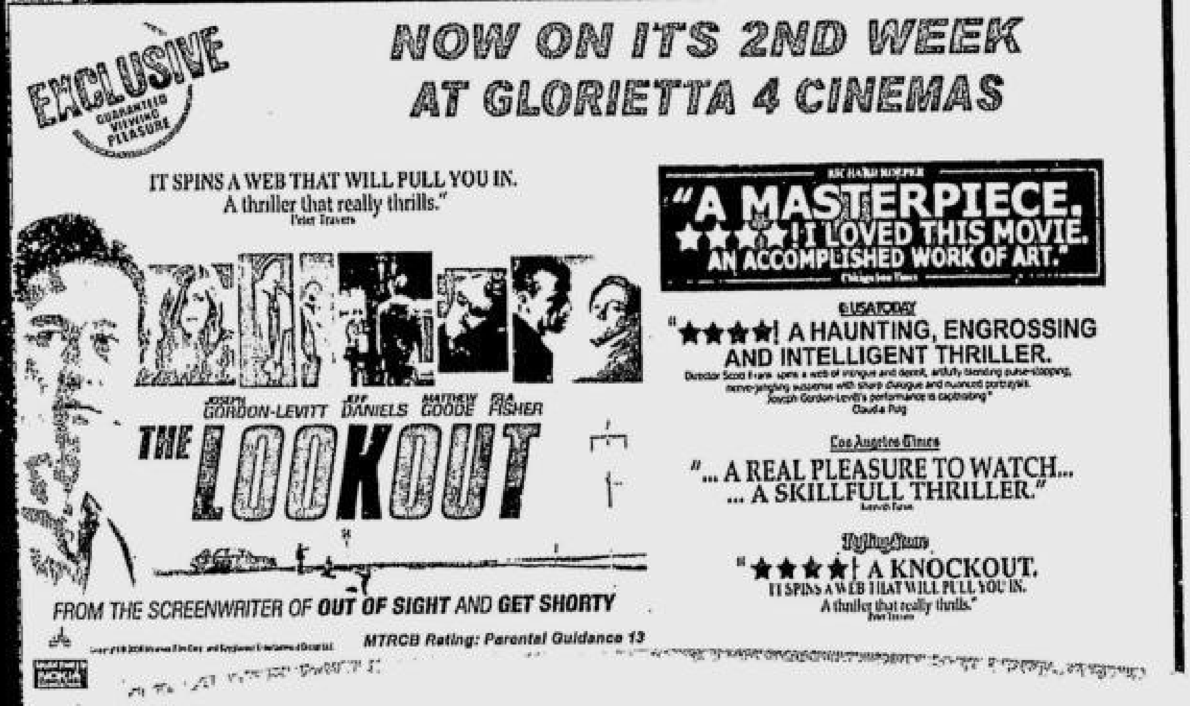
Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
GLORIETTA 1	RISE	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM	RUSH HOUR 3	A LOVE STORY			
GLORIETTA 4	A LOVE STORY	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM	THX THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM GUARANTEED SEATS	THE LOOKOUT	SURF'S UP	RUSH HOUR 3	THE SIMPSONS
GREENBELT 1	A LOVE STORY	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM					
GREENBELT 3	THX THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM GUARANTEED SEATS	THX RUSH HOUR 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	RATATOUILLE GUARANTEED SEATS	SURF'S UP GUARANTEED SEATS	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM GUARANTEED SEATS		
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM	A LOVE STORY	RUSH HOUR 3	SURF'S UP	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM		
AYALA CENTER CEBU	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM	RUSH HOUR 3	A LOVE STORY	SURF'S UP			
MARKET! MARKET!	A LOVE STORY	SURF'S UP	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM	RISE	RUSH HOUR 3		
TRINOMA	A LOVE STORY	RATATOUILLE	RISE GUARANTEED SEATS	SURF'S UP GUARANTEED SEATS	RUSH HOUR 3	THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM	THX THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM GUARANTEED SEATS

AT THE MALLS

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:
Glorietta - 752 7272
Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000
Ayala Malls

glorietta	C2 Event August 18, 2007 at the Activity Center
GREENBELT	Shop & Travel at Greenbelt 1 Promo Get a chance to win exciting prizes and a trip for two to Boracay for every P300 worth of purchase at any Greenbelt 1 establishment from July 1 to September 30, 2007
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Mechanical Action August 17 to 19; 11 am, 3 pm & 6 pm at the Activity Center
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Uyfang Kiosk August 3 to 30, 2007 at the AFEC Access
MARKET! MARKET!	Veggie Superkids August 18, 2007 at the Activity Center
Greenbelt Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents Disney's CINDERELLA Kids at REP's Globe Theater - Opens August 11, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
Ayala MUSEUM	Elements Photoconstructed Realities August 16 to 29, 2007 For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
Tri Noma	BPI EPS Event August 12, 2007 at the Activity Center Job World Job Fair August 15 & 16, 2007 at the Activity Center


EXCLUSIVE GUARANTEED VIEWING PLEASURE
NOW ON ITS 2ND WEEK AT GLORIETTA 4 CINEMAS
IT SPINS A WEB THAT WILL PULL YOU IN. A thriller that really thrills." Peter Travers
"A MASTERPIECE. ★★★★! I LOVED THIS MOVIE. AN ACCOMPLISHED WORK OF ART."
USA TODAY "★★★★! A HAUNTING, ENGROSSING AND INTELLIGENT THRILLER."
Los Angeles Times "... A REAL PLEASURE TO WATCH... ... A SKILLFULL THRILLER."
Rolling Stone "★★★★! A KNOCKOUT. IT SPINS A WEB THAT WILL PULL YOU IN. A thriller that really thrills."
JOSEPH GORDON-LEVITT JEFF DANIELS MATTHEW GOODE ISLA FISHER
THE LOOKOUT
FROM THE SCREENWRITER OF OUT OF SIGHT AND GET SHORTY
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13

SALE! SALE!
Come to Market! Market! on August 17 to 19 for great bargains!
Fri - Sat: 10am - 10pm
Sun: 10am - 9pm
Plus, catch the PBA Rookie Draft at the Activity Center on Aug. 19 at 12nn.
PER DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-273, Series of 2007
glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! TriNoma